carbusters

JOURNAL OF THE CARFREE MOVEMENT #38 / MAY 2009 - JULY 2009

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End of the Road?

Is there a future for the auto industry? Has the car culture reached the end of the road? Simply, is this the end? Indeed, these questions are on the lips of many people.

No one can avoid the news: this is one of the most tumultuous times on record for the global financial markets. With the global economy in freefall, the auto industry is facing turbulent times. In an effort to avert a depression in the car industry, governments are spending billions of dollars to kick-start economic growth in the form of 'bailout' loans for carmakers. As many enjoy government largesse, it is clear, however, that something is up – with hefty job cuts, reduction or halt in production and growing stockpiles of unsold cars – even mighty injections of cash into carmakers engines, the problems are deep and probably irreversible. Combined with global issues such as climate change and peak oil reaching boiling point, the reality is that the cars day as our primary mode of transport is likely over as people now explore the alternatives.

The economic crisis gives us an ideal opportunity to re-evaluate how we should choose to travel. If we are not doing it already, let's use the worse times to make a new start. No matter how we do it, we can all make a difference and act upon what we believe: to be carfree. Choosing to walk, cycle or skate, and using the bus, tram, train, or rickshaw – the alternatives make sense: economically, socially and environmentally. Further, cars are the unhealthy choice according to Doctor David Haslam's diagnosis and Cat Chappell prescribes the active remedies: walking and cycling (page 16). Groningen is a city that has followed doctor's orders, and by taking a historical tour we see how it has become the world's number one cycling city (page 10).

Fighting against the use of cars can leave us with emotions of deepest, darkest despair, but there is a lot going on at the moment to fill us with brilliant, bright optimism. In this issue there are many things to leave you feeling optimistic for the future. Looking at the situation from the perspective of low-income countries, although there are many more problems than growing car-dependency, Debra Efroymson shows us that carfree culture has the potential to flourish in the future (page 20).

Making green choices is not always about saving the planet; it's also about taking social responsibility and enjoying twenty-first century life to the fullest. If more people opted for public transport, walking or cycling than driving, then communities would be healthier, probably happier and would have a lighter impact on the environment. But before, it is important to provide a solid basis for carfree living, which empowers people to do it together. In the first of a new regular column, Joel Crawford takes us through what needs to be done to make today's cities carfree in 'Carfree Conversions' (page 24).

"Its time to get some new ideas into the discourse"

Physically redesigning urban spaces, encouraging cars to slow down and opening up more social spaces, is a permanent solution for making our towns and cities carfree. There are new and existing ways of doing this. Urban designers are now looking to New Urbanism, which draws on existing examples to create carfree places as Andy Kunz discusses (page 14). Eco-towns are presented as low-cost, low-carbon, scaled-down community spaces – effective at slowing and removing the car. Bruce Stutz further investigates new and existing eco-town developments, as well as their potential to tackle a growing urban sprawl (page 12).

It is clear that now is the time to get some critical mass behind the idea of change and get new ideas into the discourse. In this issue we explore what it's going to take to get us from where we are now to where we want to be…

Jane Harding

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Editorial Collective:
Çiğdem Çevrim, Jane Harding, Marc-Henri Thull

Other World Carfree Network Staff: Tanja Eskola, Kamila Murphy, Radka Tichavska

Graphic Design: Çiğdem Çevrim

Front Cover Artwork: Ewan McCrae
Inside Back Cover Design: Valentin Aguado
Back Cover Artwork: Ken Avidor

Contributors: Valentin Aguado, Ken Avidor, Roger Bysouth, Craig Calfee, Cat Chappell, Chris Coleman, Joel Crawford, Ton Daggers, Debra Efroymson, Rebekka Fagnani, Sam Fleet, André Forget, Dr. David Haslam, Ed Howarth, Faizan Jawed, Martin Kaltwasser, Adrian Kinloch, Folke Köbberling, Andy Kunz, River Laker, Octavio Zegarra Lazarte, Jan Losenický, Marta Mancusi, Ewan McCrae, Jason Meggs, Steve Melia, Daniel Mourek, Adam Pride, Ron Richings, Rahidul Samana Roky, Andy Singer, Ivan Strápek, Bruce Stutz, Milton Takei, Tran Kieu Thanh Ha, Titom, Andrew Wheeldon, Tim Wojcik, Stephen Young

Reprints: Please contact us: editors@carbusters.org

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Carbusters, Krátká 26
100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic
tel/fax: +(420) 274-810-849
editors@carbusters.org
www.carbusters.org

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Education and Culture DG
'Youth in Action' Programme

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Where to Allow (and ban) Car Parking

The parking of automobiles is clearly a wasteful use of road space, but the alternatives providing all off-street parking – is a wasteful use of other resources. A compromise is thus needed to improve the efficiency of road space without inflicting inordinate costs on society in terms of paying for off-street parking.

A few places should absolutely ban car parking, with sufficiently strong penalties to serve as true deterrents. These include busy streets, all footpaths, and all parks and playgrounds. Banning car parking on busy streets could allow for greater provision of space for bicycle lanes, rickshaws, and an efficient bus rapid transit system. Car parking on footpaths is an offensive deterrent to pedestrians and should never be tolerated, any more than would the stowing of other personal belongings (a bed, a table, a desk) on the footpath.

Minor streets could allow car parking within designated areas, with people around to collect fees based on time and space used. Sensitive areas that require free access and especially where children gather should ban parking altogether within a certain radius. This would include schools, and would have the effect of reducing traffic congestion, increasing safety, and serving as an inducement to travel to school by more efficient modes.

Rahidul Samana Roky, Dhaka,Bangladesh

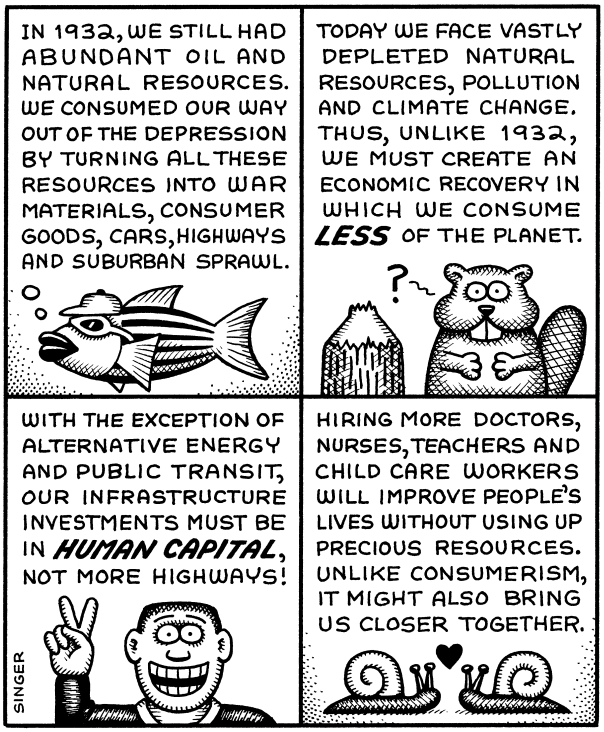
Automobile Industry Jobs

Since the problems of United States automakers have been in the news, I have been again wondering if the end of the automobile age will mean fewer jobs. Along with the jobs for autoworkers, cars create jobs at filling stations, car washes, insurance companies, etc. Fighting global warming will mean more people will have jobs driving buses, repairing bicycles, making renewable energy equipment, etc. But I suspect that society, as a whole will experience a net loss of jobs.

Governments will need to adopt measures to help provide food and housing for the unemployed during the transition to a sustainable society. Organic farming would be one place for people to obtain a livelihood. Farmers might make less money than autoworkers, but they have a chance to be their own boss. They can also grow a lot of their own food. But potential farmers might not have access to land. Governments should try to provide land for organic farmers; the richer countries also need land reform.

Milton Takei, Oregon, USA

NO EXIT **© Andy Singer**


IN 1932, WE STILL HAD ABUNDANT OIL AND NATURAL RESOURCES. WE CONSUMED OUR WAY OUT OF THE DEPRESSION BY TURNING ALL THESE RESOURCES INTO WAR MATERIALS, CONSUMER GOODS, CARS, HIGHWAYS AND SUBURBAN SPRAWL.
TODAY WE FACE VASTLY DEPLETED NATURAL RESOURCES, POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE. THUS, UNLIKE 1932, WE MUST CREATE AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN WHICH WE CONSUME LESS OF THE PLANET.
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY AND PUBLIC TRANSIT, OUR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS MUST BE IN HUMAN CAPITAL, NOT MORE HIGHWAYS!
HIRING MORE DOCTORS, NURSES, TEACHERS AND CHILD CARE WORKERS WILL IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES WITHOUT USING UP PRECIOUS RESOURCES. UNLIKE CONSUMERISM, IT MIGHT ALSO BRING US CLOSER TOGETHER.
SINGER

The Car Top Bike Trailer Lives

Sometimes things are not so valuable by virtue of what they are, but by what they can become. So when I saw an abandoned car top carrier in a back lane, it wasn't just a discarded plastic box that I saw, but rather the potential waterproof, large capacity bicycle cargo trailer that it could become. Some wooden 2x2's, a bit of plywood, and glue for the frame. "Found" wheels, and a couple of dollars of steel tubing later, and voila! The pieces emerge from their cocoon to become the trailer that was always their potential. Total cost perhaps US$ 5.00.

An initial trial run delivering a bunch of bottles to a recycling depot, and taking some groceries home established that it works just fine. Of course it has the capacity to carry a fairly vast amount of stuff but is ideally suited for those bulky but relatively light objects that can be difficult to strap to the back of a bike. They laughed when I told them what could be done by bicycle, but when I started playing with trailers...

Ron Richings, Vancouver, Canada

Debra Efroymson relaxes on a rickshaw in Bangladesh with Carbusters

World Carfree Network brings together organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting alternatives to car dependence. Member Group Profile outlines the history, latest projects and carfree activities of one member.

■ By Andrew Wheeldon

Bicycling Empowerment Network

Cycling in Cape Town

Cape Town, and indeed South Africa, has first and third world communities living alongside one another. As a result of almost 50 years of legislated apartheid – during which time entire communities were removed from healthy, clean and socially integrated areas to racially separated, remote and dusty "townships" – access to opportunities was forcefully removed from the majority of the population. While this process has begun to slowly reverse itself during the past 13 years of democratic government, with a series of development, re-settlement programmes and improving social conditions, much racial division and separation still exists. Many communities spend hours each day treading long dusty paths to places of work or to schools, or out simply searching for work. Others have to pay hard-earned wages for costly and at times inefficient and unsafe forms of public transport.

It is in the spirit of this environment that the Bicycling Empowerment Network (BEN) was established, in Cape Town in February 2002. The main mission of BEN is poverty alleviation through the promotion of the use of the bicycle in all of its forms – to enhance low-cost non-motorised transport and to improve health through linking exercise and mobility. Together with local and international partners, BEN facilitates the transportation of bicycles from Europe to Southern Africa, the establishment of bicycle workshop projects, the distribution of these bicycles to strategically selected groups of recipients and the planning and introduction of bicycle user paths and integrated linking networks.

Bicycles are for mobility and job creation, for sharing and unifying communities. Over the past five years BEN has explored and implemented the establishment of bicycle projects in nine rural and urban townships; delivered more than 4,000 new and 3,500 used bicycles to schools, places of work and farms – with community-based organisations and outreach events. BEN has trained the young and the old in bike maintenance, road safety and brought about a growing understanding of the value of bicycles as a form of mobility. The nine new BEN bicycle empowerment repair businesses have been established in areas where there is a great need for low-cost mobility and the newly employed project managers provide long-term support for the community and indeed their bicycles. BEN serves on a committee with the Cape Town City and Province of the Western Cape to look at bicycle infrastructure for the city and surrounding township and rural settlements.

As a result of these partnerships and programmes a bicycling city is emerging in Cape Town. But much still needs to be done. For BEN, these are (a) more bicycles being used for more purposes by more diverse population groups (b) greater interest shown by various beneficiaries, stakeholders and potential partners in this outcome (c) greater involvement and commitment by the relevant city and provincial authorities in these programmes so as to ensure the necessary policy and infrastructure is realised and (d) parallel programmes and events to help promote of these ideals.

During the past five years, Cape Town and the Western Cape Government have taken small strides to realise this vision of a bicycling city in supporting BEN in the distribution of these commuter-style bicycles. These commuter bikes complement the established racing and recreational market already existing in South Africa. More bicycles are now being used on Cape Town roads, for a greater variety of reasons and purposes. Kids are cycling to school in townships, suburbs and rural areas. Many have received training in the maintenance of their bicycle and safety on the roads. Adults are beginning to use more bicycles, for more reasons – as they begin to realise the efficiency, low cost and health benefits of this activity. BEN was invited as a partner and contributor to the strategic planning of the future of Cape Town and the Western Cape in respect of roads and transport – and how communities move and go about their daily lives. Many events are being planned at regular intervals – Bike to Work Days, Car Free Days, School Bike events, all of which helps to raise the consciousness and status of cycling in South Africa and, it is hoped, this will extend to other parts of Africa.

With a growing population and a struggle to access education and employment, the bicycle may just prove to be the answer to communities in need of low-cost, efficient and environmentally sound forms of transport. Cape Town is beginning to demonstrate that, with successful partnerships, this can be achieved. ■

For more information, please visit: www.benbikes.org.za

Think or drive!

Robert Jones, a driver from Doncaster, UK, followed the instructions of his sat-nav a little too carefully – only noticing the limits of the machine as he hit a fence on the edge of a cliff. His sat-nav mistook a footpath for a road and he followed it. His sat-nav showed a road continuing over the cliff and he continued without hesitation. Of course, some think that the subjective perceptions of human beings are not as reliable as the cold calculations of machines… But what if there hadn't been a fence? Robert Jones was forced to re-evaluate his anti-humanist philosophy when he reached the end of the road with his BMW, almost too late. He was charged with driving without due care and attention. An interesting metaphor perhaps: for the unconditional support shown to car industries and our leaders' reactions to climate change. Hopefully there is a fence strong enough to prevent our fall. **www.bbc.co.uk**

Little Driver

Lost for ideas on what to do with your children this weekend? The search is over: go to Diggerland, UK. This theme park offers children the possibility to ride in, and drive, different types of construction machinery. They recently opened a new programme called "Novice driver" that allows now children from nine years of age to drive the car of their parents. If the parent's car is too uncool, then a 4x4 is available for hire to teach kids how to be a good citizen – one loves cars. Young drivers are allowed to drive in a wide empty area and are assisted by a driver with a license. One more step towards absurdity has been reached, but we know there is no limit in progress…
www.diggerland.com

Kings of the Road

According to a new study from Quality Planning – a firm specialised in information provision for the insurance industry – drivers of Hummers receive almost five times as many more traffic tickets than the average driver. Researchers explain this difference with the mistaken feeling of invincibility induced by the Hummer's elevated driving position. "The sense of power that Hummer drivers derive from their vehicle may be directly correlated with the number of violations they incur, or perhaps Hummer drivers, by virtue of their driving position, are less likely to notice road hazards, signs, pedestrians and other drivers," said Raj Bhat, the president of Quality Planning. This comes as no surprise to *Carbusters* – driving a Hummer in 2009 definitely shows a complete lack of attention to the surrounding environment, streetwise or otherwise.
www.wired.com

Problem of Definition

Aptera motors have designed a new electric car that goes 160 km on a single charge and should be ready to be sold by the end of the year. Nevertheless, they won't get money from the US government – funds that promote electric vehicles and other high-efficiency cars in the *Innovative Vehicle Act*. Why not? Because this vehicle has three wheels and is therefore not considered a car – a car is a motor vehicle with four wheels and there is no exception. As said the representative of Aptera motors, Brian Bilbray, his company is the victim "of an arbitrary designation made ages ago by some bureaucrat". However, if the company manage to prove that their vehicle is a car, they will be able to benefit from another arbitrary and absurd designation made by bureaucrats: "green car". **www.wired.com**

You have to buy a new car!

European governments are blindly supporting the car industry and this extreme support appears in ever more absurd manifestations. In Germany, with the pretext of promoting "green cars", the government is currently offering €2,500 to people buying a new car. It doesn't matter if you scrap a small fuel-efficient car to replace it with a Hummer. Maybe the idea is to go further and faster in the dead-end street of oil production and consumption, in order to be sure that there is a huge problem to deal with. Then it would look like a perfect strategy.

Unfortunately this payment just appears as a new lack of creativity to face existing problems. Verkehrsclub Deutschland (VCD), a member of the European Federation for Transport and Environment organised an interesting protest against this incentive. They set up a web page to allow people to apply for this €2,500, in order to replace their old car by a bike or public transport's tickets. VCD has been therefore threatened with legal actions by German authorities, if they wouldn't remove this web page. The message is clear, car industries represent the public interest; environmental and social issues belong to the private sphere! So, if you want to act as a responsible citizen, buy a new car!
www.transportenvironment.org

London mobility justice

Boris Johnson, the mayor of London is trying to improve the sharing of public space in a rather peculiar way. Indeed, he noticed the disadvantages of driving a car in London due to congestion. Will he therefore promote biking or public transportation to fight against this problem? No, this is nonsense and he seems to have a smarter

solution to the situation. He explained to the London Assembly that: "[he] was driving around Ealing one Sunday and [he] found the traffic lights absolutely insane. There was hardly any pedestrian traffic to speak of and we were being kept at red for minute after minute."

It would be so absurd to invite people to cut their car use to reduce traffic congestion. Therefore Boris Johnson proposed to introduce digital signs that count down the seconds until cars get a green light. This would allow giving more green time to traffic and he hopes it will help to solve congestion problems in London. Pedestrians will loose up to 6 seconds to cross roads, but it is probably "insane" to consider this as a regression concerning transport policies in the 21st century. Pedestrians will have to walk faster and older people or disabled people should take a car ride or stay at home, rather than disturb car drivers. Living Streets, which campaigns for pedestrians noticed that already more than 500 London junctions fail to give pedestrians the minimum time set by the UK Department for Transport safety guidelines. Of course, this is just the point of view of people led blind by their ideology.

Just a last detail, the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published a report showing that Britain is the worst country in Europe for road pollution. According to the report, UK levels of dangerous traffic fumes, caused by congestion and high population concentrations, are placing people's health at risk. It seems that Boris Johnson got the point. **www.timesonline.co.uk**

Friends of Nature

What is the best way to appreciate the charms of nature and to embrace its harmonious atmosphere? It is of course to have a peaceful journey through the forest on a quad-bike or a 4x4… Nevertheless, some people don't understand this poetic and humble activity and complain about this gentle hobby. It is the case of two mayors of small towns in northern France who engaged in legal action after the destruction of paths in the regional nature park of *Caps et Marais d'Opale*. The passage of hundreds of quads and 4x4s through this protected area damaged paths, digging holes up to 1,20m deep.

It is not the first time that similar problems happen in the area of *Caps et Marais d'Opale* and there are more and more complaints over the last months. Of course, one has to understand that this is a "green hobby". As said Jacques Regnier from the Collective of Defence for Green Leisure, "Our vehicles are well maintained and our motors don't make noise. Somehow, it is us who maintain some ways…" Facing (slowly) rising limitations upon their "green hobby", some associations already find the way to continue enjoying the countryside… in Morocco.
www.lavoixdunord.fr

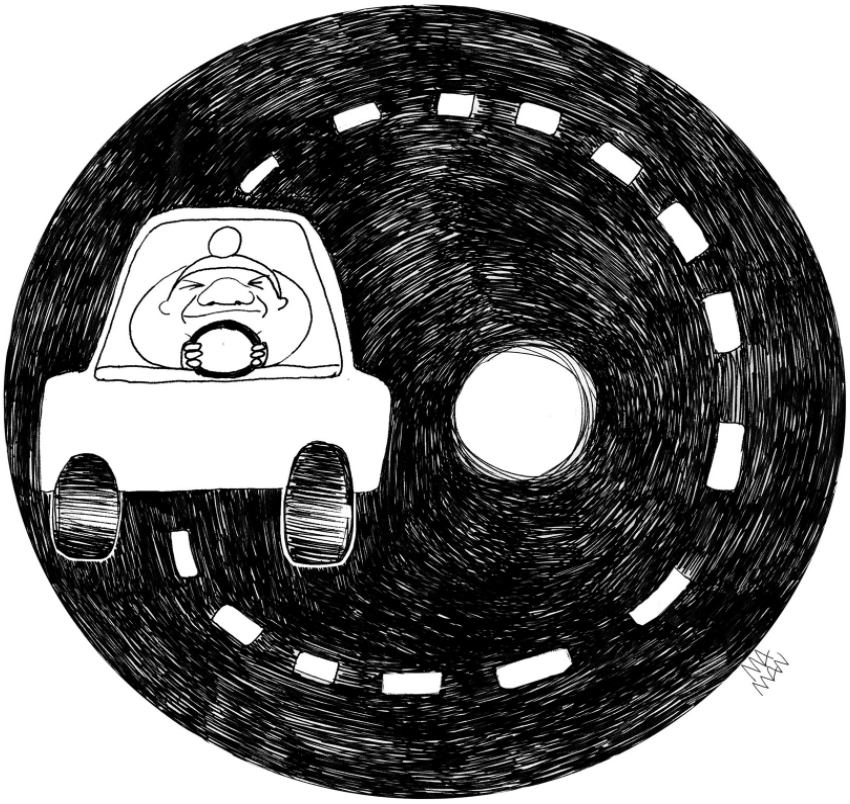
Going round in circles

A 62-year-old woman was caught in Germany after circling a roundabout more than 50 times. She explained to the police that she wanted to "break in" her new car, but that it "would not work so well" on normal surface streets. "The officers blocked the car with their patrol vehicle and brought the pilot in for a pit stop," police said in a statement. Facing this bizarre infraction, the police made an alcohol test and sent the lady back home, because she was sober. One can imagine their feeling of helplessness towards this lady going round in circles, like we feel it towards never-ending rounds in circles from our decision-makers.
www.thelocal.de

The sense of responsibility

The transport minister of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, Oliver Wittke, was caught on camera at the speed of 109 km/h in a municipality where the speed limit was 50. His driving license was taken away, but people from different political camps asked for his resignation.

For Dirk Fisher from Witkke's party CDU, "When a transport minister attracts that kind of attention, he doesn't just have a problem, he's got a big problem. In the end, he's supposed to be a guardian of the rules." Wittke finally decided to resign in February 2009, under the pressure. We will unfortunately have to wait a long time for the resignation of those responsible for the (crap) car scrap incentive scheme adopted in Germany under the pressure of carmakers.
www.thelocal.de



action!

"You never change anything by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." B. Fuller

© Marco Carrion Estrada

© Adrian Kinloch

Naked, but not Quiet

Cyclists from all parts of Peru met in Lima on March 14 for the World Naked Bike Ride. In total around 300 people took part in the ride – all ages, genders, some half-naked and some fully, with painted bodies and costumes – all looked different, but all were on two wheels.

Before the ride, enthusiastic cyclists undressed in the streets a few blocks from the starting line, surprised passers-by and offered their encouragement. Artists on standby painted creative messages and colourful designs onto bare bodies of the riders, attracting press keen for the first pictures.

The purpose was to ride in tranquillity, without the danger of imprudent drivers in their path. Thanks to great effort of participants and the general public helping to organise the event, the day was a great success. Police supported riders on the day, but not the municipality who didn't want the event to interrupt car transit. Luckily, they didn't put a stop to the naked bike ride, or even reject their message: *Desnudos pero no callados*, "Naked but not Quiet".

Facing an alarming state of urban transit in Peru; this event helps promotes bicycle-use, re-investments in public space and other alternative transportation. Nudity is a great way to protest and show the vulnerability of cyclists which have to share the roads with motorised transport – attracting media which carry the message across Peru and to other countries.

by Octavio Zegarra Lazarte
www.cicloaxion.org

Time Up! Bike Clown Ride

On March 14 the Time's Up! Bicycle Clown Brigade went out to liberate new bike lanes throughout downtown Manhattan, New York, US.

The ride ended with a pie fight with the New York Police Department (NYPD) officers, who escorted the ride but refused to move any cars the clowns encountered. The clowns successfully cleared the bike lanes as they warned drivers parked in the lanes to beware of the Ides - make that - Pies of March.

While cyclists are beaming with joy of the new bike lanes, NYPD has yet to fully enforce the traffic law that prohibits any motor vehicle from parking and idling in the bike lanes. At first they had tried to thwart the clowns' mission of demonstrating the environmental damage caused by polluting transportation and celebrations of the beauty of bike riding.

Betrayal was everywhere on the Pies of March ride but resolution was reached throughout the day: cars quickly moved out of the lanes, an NYPD escort squad car actually helped move a car from a bike lane, and a taxi driver happily displayed the bike love proclamation on his dashboard and gave the clowns a hug.

The ride ended with a big pie fight: clowns against cops. Once both the Time's Up! Bike Clowns and police were both completely creamed, Officers Compassion, Professionalism and Respect declared a truce and promised that officers would start enforcing traffic law in lanes so cyclists can feel safe and take advantage of all the wonderful new bike lanes.
www.times-up.org

Bike Station Expansion Victory

Cyclists in Berkeley, US , were celebrating after the city council approved to help the expansion of a downtown bike park station. The anouncement coming at the end of last year, is a critical hurdle overcome for activists, who now have hopes set on a June deadline for the next set of project funding.

After a 10-year planning process and a protracted lobbying campaign, the council agreed with what bicyclists have said for years: that promoting bicycling requires safe, guarded facilities to prevent bike theft and a convenient location for cycling support. The council now joins the BART District (metro), in funding the project.

The new station will allow parking for over 300 bicycles, at least quadrupling the capacity of the long-jammed existing station.

© Samuel Pereira (CCed)

© Jason Falconer / Sustrans

Mumbai
Bicycle Betterment

As one of the world's densest urban areas, (18 million people), the city of Mumbai, India is choking - from congestion on the roadways and footpaths, and smog that hangs in the hot, humid air. If an open space appears, it is quickly filled with variety of buildings, vehicles, people, and animals. The city presents a serious lack of public space. Therefore residents gathered in late March at a public forum to discuss how their quality of life could be improved through better bicycle infrastructure.

Faizan Jawed, a young Indian architect and Colin Christopher, an American graduate student, organised the public forum through a new initiative entitled, *The Open Bicycle Project*. In opposition to the communal divisions of India, the organisers targeted a diverse audience. Discussants ranged from the cosmopolitan, rich English-speaking suburban population to working-class residents who use bicycles for their daily work.

Importance was stressed on raising awareness and action at the grassroots-level and examples pointed of the successes in other Indian cities as encouraging signs of progress.

While bicycle infrastructure and related issues were not taken seriously during this election season, congestion, pollution, and pathways for India's millions of bicyclists will have to be addressed sooner or later – whether politicians like it or not.

"If we don't have parking on one side of the street, we can make that space the area for bicycle lanes," suggested a nine-year-old avid bicyclist.

by Faizan Phaizan

Bike it!
For a Fitter Future

Obesity is a growing problem in the United Kingdom and worryingly it is spreading to a young generation. One third of 10 and 11-year-old children in Bournemouth and Poole, Southeast UK are either overweight or obese. Today the school run accounts for 20% of all cars on the road and obesity levels in the UK are on the rise with 25% of 11 to 15-year-old children being overweight or obese.

To tackle this driving to school syndrome, Sustrans, National Health Service (NHS) Bournemouth and Poole joined forces to get cars off the roads and children onto their bikes.

Sustrans "Bike It" project encourages pupils across the region to choose two wheels instead of four for the journey to school. This is a nationwide scheme, managed by sustainable transport non-profit organisation Sustrans.

The project was officially launched on March 27, in Bournemouth. 340 pupils took part in the "Keep it Wheel" bike week, which inspired an entire school to saddle up and see for themselves how easy cycling can be. For the next four years "Bike It" will aim to treble the levels of cycling across all participating schools.

The "Bike It" project works with over 400 schools and over 60,000 children and young people across England and Wales. Nationally the project is funded by Cycling England, and the cycle industry through the Bike Hub, locally the scheme is also supported by the local NHS trust and Poole Borough Council.

by Ed Howarth
www.sustrans.org.uk

The project introduces bicycle safety and skills training, rentals, repairs, an advice service from staff morning to night, and mechanicson standby. There will also be space for small businesses, advocacy groups, meetings and cultural events. Research shows that new cyclists are most at risk for injury, fatality, and simply discouragement, and thus social and cultural support are critical for protecting and retaining new cyclists.

As Berkeley embarks on its Climate Action Plan, promoting bicycling at the downtown hub makes environmental sense, and will lead to less use of cars. A BART study shows many rail patrons will switch to bicycling from driving the new facility opens.

by Jason Meggs

Photo © **Rebekka Fagnani**

■ **by Ton Daggers and Jane Harding**

Groningen

The World's Cycling City

In Groningen, the Netherlands' sixth largest city, the main form of transport is the bicycle. The city is famous for having the highest percentage of bicycle usage in the world. How has Groningen done it? Cycling here, and indeed in much of the Netherlands, is just the norm. The success comes from a series of sound policies which view cycling as an integral part of urban renewal, planning and transport strategy. By providing proper infrastructure and amenities cycling has blossomed over time and today the main 46 routes of the cycling network is used daily by 216,000 citizens. By prioritising and promoting cycling as the main mode of transportation, city planners, local authorities and cycling advocates have played an important part in the city's reputation as a great place to live.

Groningen has a relatively young population of approximately 180,000 inhabitants, which account for a large proportion of the city bikers, but people of all ages opting for two wheels over four. And this is a growing trend. Research by Groningen municipality in 2008 showed a considerable growth of cycling in the last years: an average of 1.4 bicycle trips per person per day in the city, making up more than 50% of the total journeys, a growth of 9% from 2007. In order to further understand the sucess of the bicycle in Groningen, it is important to look at how urban design and policies have changed over time to make it the leading cycle city we see today.

"Cycling is viewed as an integral part of urban renewal, planning and transport strategy"

History of Carfree Development

The city has a long history of urban developments which have maintained the value of keeping the inner city as a central point for a host of activities: a blend of living, working and shopping which favours pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation over the car. Since the 1960s the municipality has been way ahead in its traffic plans and spatial planning policies; maintaining a vision of a "compact city" and implementing policies which have led to a carfree city centre, with almost all areas easily reachable by bicycle. However, the path has not always been easy.

During the 1950s and 1960s most cities and towns in the Netherlands were making room for vechicles – some even removed bicycle paths in order to free up space for the car. In Groningen, motorisation was growing rapidly and so was suburban sprawl – there were no restrictions for cars driving through and very few cycle routes leading to the centre. The motorist was king at this time.

In 1972, local authorities changed the emphasis of urban planning and development in Groningen. The centre of the city was to be considered as the "living room" for its people. The basic concept used in urban planning was based on the "compact city" vision, which placed an integrated transport system high on the agenda – for an inner city favour-

ing a combined use of pedestrians, cyclists, buses and other means of public transport. A traffic circulation plan divided the inner city into four sections and a ring road was built, encircling the city and reducing access to the centre by car. The result was an inner city which is entirely closed off to cars, and only possible to travel between sectors by walking, bicycling or using public transport. What has further spurred the use of bicycles over all other sustainable transportation is the huge expansion of the cycle network – there are many traffic free bike lanes from the outskirts to the city centre – making cycling is the most viable mode of transport for most journeys.

Importance of policy

The city treats cyclists with respect. A series of sound transportation policies and investments has maintained a carfree urban space – favouring walking, public transport and predominantly cycling. This has resulted in a major trend away from car-use to bike-use in the city of Groningen. Between 1989 and 2000, € 23 million was invested in cycling infrastructure and the annual amount continues to grow. Investments have also been made to expand the network of cycling lanes, improve the pavements, build bridges for cyclists, and many more bike parking facilities – making cycling faster and more convenient. As cycling is the lifeblood of the city, it has been given adequate space and time to flow safely and efficiently.

During the 1980s and 1990s a car parking policy was strictly implemented. Car parking with time restrictions was introduced in a broad radius around the inner city. Park and Ride areas were created combined with city buses and other high quality public transport. But overall, cycling policy has been central to the traffic plans, which in contrast, car accessibility has been restricted within the city centre.

Reaping the Rewards

Over a long period of time local authorities have made clear choices, however manifold criticised. Traffic circulation plans were based on the concentration of motorised traffic into a limited road space on the outskirts of the city, and developing a very coherent, comfortable and dense cycle network. This is the result of a clear vision of urban development – based on the idea that a city is for its people. Groningen is a compact city, and for now at least, continues to stay this way. For example, newly built neighbourhoods are no more than 6 km from the city centre. Groningen municipality research showed in 2008 78% of residents and 90% of employees now live within 3 km of the city centre. Residential areas are developed with good connections to the city centre and green lungs in between. There are entire housing developments built along major bicycle and scooter "roadways", massive bike parks everywhere, many roads that are one way for cars but two way for bikes, and special signal phases for bikes.

Photo © **Annette van der Molen** www.amphotography.nl

Groningen in Numbers

Population: 180,000 inhabitants
Size of Groningen: 87 square kilometres
Residents Traveling by Bike: 57%
Average cycling trips each day: 1.4 per person
Number of cycling routes in Groningen: 46
Number using cycling routes each day: 216,000

"The centre of the city was to be considered as the 'living room' for its people"

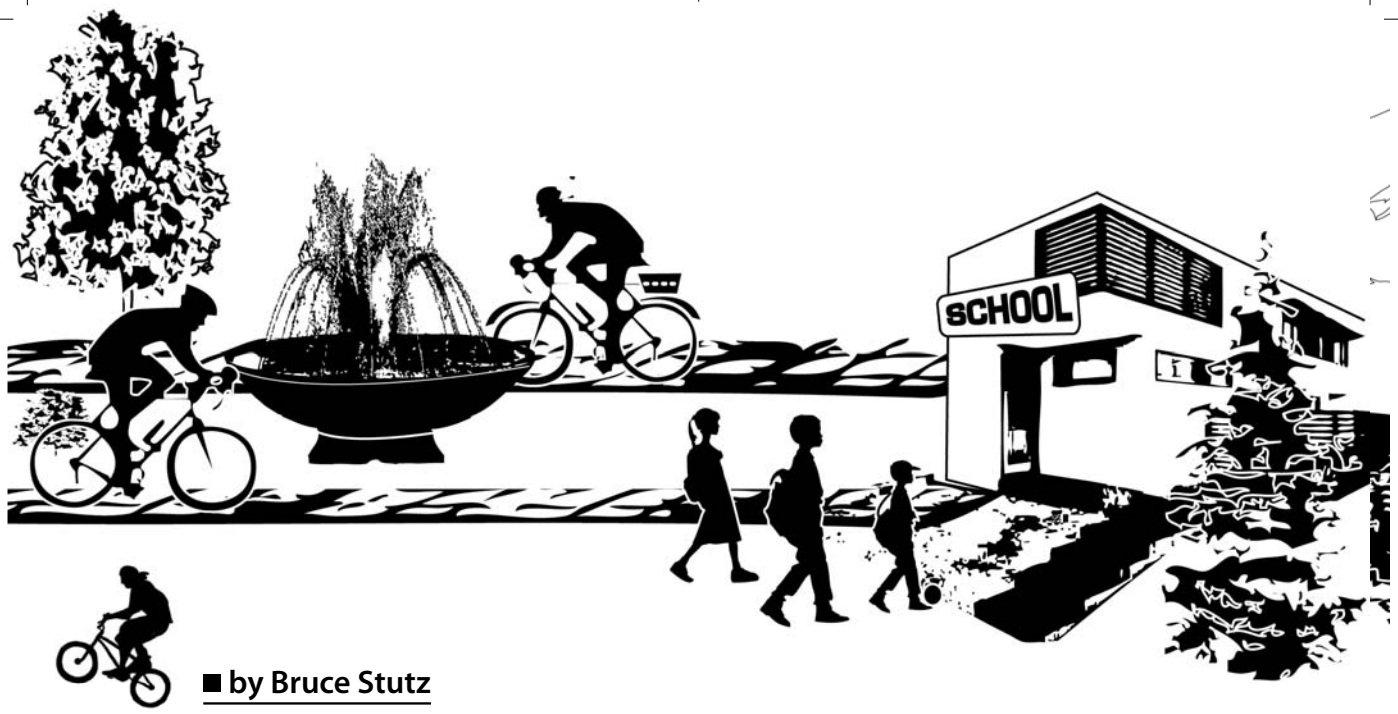
There are some interesting economic repercussions to come out of replacing space for cars with greenery, pedestrianisation, cycleways and bus lanes. Banning car traffic has boosted jobs and business. Groningen's economic development has improved, particularly for businesses which were once in revolt against car restraint, but now are clamouring for more of it. The main function of the inner city has become a successful mix of living, working and shopping.

Cycling into the Future

Groningen undoubtedly leads the way in the "cyclisation" of European cities, but many others are putting two wheels in motion to follow its example. However, no other European city can match Groningen's record, where 57% of all trips around the city are on bikes, but in quite a few cities the ratio is rising to a third or more.

The impressive high rate of cycling in Groningen can be explained best by consistent urban development and transportation policies based on reclaiming inner city space from cars, making it into a living room for its people. This spatial concept of city development has undoubtedly been rooted in the clear political vision of the Social Democrats for several decades. Such legislative commitments do seem to be the key in getting citizens to kick the car habit. Apart from a political vision, many other actors involved in making Groningen the "World's Cycling City" cannot be ignored – the cyclists themselves. In a nutshell, the success of cycling in Groningen can be explained as a result of a strong vision for a liveable city for its people.

For more information, please visit:
www.cyclinginfo.nl and **www.fietsberaad.nl**



■ by Bruce Stutz

New Urbanism&Eco-Towns
Tackling Urban Sprawl

Can Eco-towns stop the sprawling suburbs? Urban sprawl is a modern phenomenon most prominent in the United States and spreading into parts of Europe, it has many consequences which include the rising carbon emissions from modern consuming habits such as private car use. This article is a selection of excerpts from two recent articles by Bruce Stutz **The New Urbanists: Tackling Europe's Sprawl** ***and*** **Britain's Elusive Eco-Town Dream.** ***Stutz analyses the debate surrounding*** **eco-town** ***developments which many regard as practical solutions for a carfree and carbon-free future, as well as the principles of New Urbanism for urban development.***

The Super Sprawl

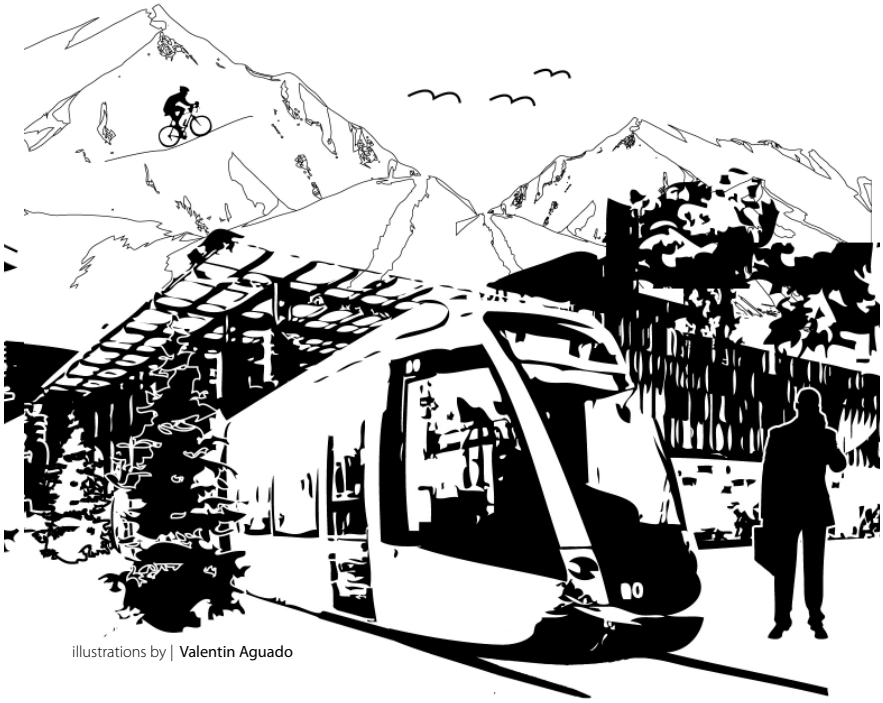
In the last few decades, urban sprawl, once regarded as largely a US phenomenon, has spread across Europe. Improved transport links – highways designed to accommodate increased freight traffic – have led to American-style intercity corridors built up with new industrial and commercial developments. Auto-centric suburbs with low-density housing tracts and shopping malls have followed, and public transit has not been able to keep pace. Now an emerging group of planners are promoting a new kind of development – mixed-use, low-carbon communities which are pedestrian-friendly and mass-transit-oriented.

A nearly iconic fact of life in the US, urban sprawl had been slow to evolve in Europe. Cities from Luxembourg to Prague, from Madrid to Istanbul, are experiencing accelerating sprawl along with its increased automobile traffic, carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, energy consumption, land fragmentation, natural resource degradation, watershed damage, farmland decline, and social polarisation –has become a major concern across the continent. Over the next 20 years, the number of kilometres travelled in urban areas may increase by 40%, an increase that would negate any expected gains in fuel efficiency, and make reaching Europe's Kyoto goals of reducing CO2 emissions nearly impossible. In the newest EU countries, those in Eastern Europe that had been communist, the changes have been even drastic. Central planning demanded high-density housing and public transit. With its entry into the EU in 2007, Romania's economy grew 5.7%, and the year after, 7.5%. This economic development drove residential construction up 29.3% in 2007, and along with it, the number of cars – up 27%.

Enter New Urbanists

For the new urbanists, building an eco-town is not a matter of building "green" buildings. More important is creating places that encourage people to change their unsustainable behaviours and then enable them to do it. New urbanism arose in the 1980s in reaction to the planning and design practices of the preceding decades. The new urbanists sought to integrate all of a town's functions, blending components to create mixed-use and mixed-income developments, compact and densely populated, where the pedestrian and bicyclist would have priority over the driver. For inspiration they looked back to traditional urban design, especially the close-knit European towns that had thrived for centuries.

European governments – as well as some in India and Asia – have begun turning to them in an effort to forestall further unsustainable growth, reclaim the lost primacy of their cities (along with their sustainable density and scale), and deliver a built environment with a much diminished carbon footprint. There are already some remarkable examples of new urbanism. Works in progress include compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly "urban extensions" underway in Amersfoort, Netherlands; Hammarby Sjostad outside of Stockholm, Sweeden; and in Adamstown, outside of Dublin, Ireland.



illustrations by | Valentin Aguado

Eco-towns: Problems and Prospects

Since the greatest share of greenhouse gas emissions comes from buildings and cars, national and local governments have initiated efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment – "sustainable cities" in the US, eco-cities in China, *villes durables* in France, eco-towns in India. It's one thing to talk about "walkable" and "bikeable" places, but what are the practical essentials of a carbon-neutral urbanist town and how does one go about developing one?

In the UK the need is particularly urgent. The government hoped that along with new public transportation initiatives and regulations on industry and coal power, its eco-towns would help the UK meet its commitment to bringing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. However, it was a lack of clear planning – as well as politics – that has mired the UK's proposed eco-towns. So public reaction was cool in 2007 when Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced an initiative to develop 10 new communities in the countryside, each of 5,000 to 15,000 homes. Citizen's committees formed; irked that the government had first asked developers, not regional and local planning authorities, where or whether they wanted these towns built. And they predicted more cars on already crowded roads. The press suggested they were greenwashing suburban development as usual.

Cars are eco-town killers. Transportation accounts for some one-third of all energy use and CO2 emissions in the UK, Europe, and the United States. Getting people out of their cars requires a combination of strategies, from the passive – such as compact development, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and substantial public transport – to the draconian – restrictions on parking, taxes on driving, limits on car ownership, and moratoriums on highway expansion, none of which are part of the eco-town plans. Inner cities once produced the greatest amounts of CO2; now it's the expanding urban fringe. In the UK over the past 20 years, transportation and domestic use have each surpassed and now far exceed the energy consumption of industry. Personal car use consumes the most. The greater the urban density, the lower the emissions.

"Town-making is a complicated business," states James Hulme, director of public affairs for the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, UK. The eco-town protesters, Hulme says, had legitimate concerns. The plans as they stood would have created "mono-use estates"; "dormitories" for commuters; towns that failed to integrate living, shopping, and workplaces and thereby continued to give driving precedence over walking. According to a report to the British government by the BioRegional Development Group, a non-profit group in Surrey, UK a well-planned eco-town could reduce its residents' share of total greenhouse emissions by 76%. The average time for walking between homes, schools, services, and shops would be no more than 15 minutes. Bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly street plans would reduce overall car use by 75%. This, however, would be only a beginning.

Carbon and Carfree Future?

The car continues to haunt the dreams of carbon-neutral town planners. Despite lower-carbon fuels, stricter emissions standards, and better fuel efficiency, CO2 emissions will continue to rise as long as the number of vehicle miles travelled – VMT (or in Europe, VKT, for kilometres) – continues to increase.

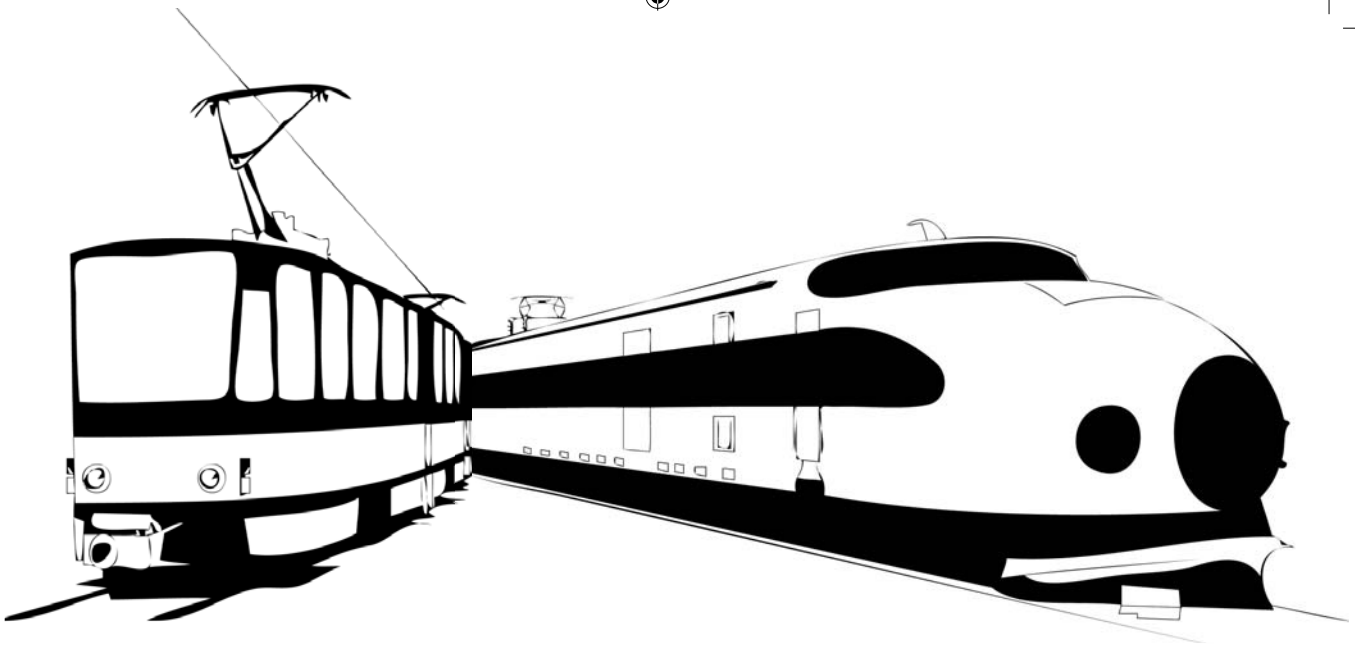
Steve Winkleman of the Center for Clean Air Policy in Washington DC, found that even if average fuel efficiency in the US increases to 35 miles per gallon, as it's required to do by 2020, the predicted increase in VMT would effectively negate any reductions in total vehicle CO2 emissions. The rise in VMT far outpaces population growth, and increased commuting is not the only explanation. Trips to and from work account for only some 20% of miles travelled. A growing proportion of these miles is made up of the distances that must be driven in the suburbs because one lives nowhere near where one shops or goes out to eat, drink, or see a film or where the kids go to school, play ball, take dance lessons, or get a haircut.

The US may have invented sprawl, but now it's a problem in Europe too, and especially in fast-growing Eastern and Central Europe. It's happening even in places where the total population is declining. Over the past 20 years, there have been four times as many new cars produced in Europe as new babies. VKT is expected to increase 40% by 2030, with a corresponding rise in CO2 emissions.

To get people out of their cars, says Steve Melia, a researcher at the University of the West of England, it will take more than reconfigured roads and new bus routes. He points to the town of Vauban, Germany, with 2,000 homes and 6,000 people, where cars now account for only 16% of local travel as a result of the prohibition on street parking except for pickup and delivery. More than three-quarters of residents bicycle to work on the town's and the region's well-established bike routes, although they can keep a car in an offsite parking garage. The British government's eco-town prospectus mentions Vauban as an exemplar of eco-development, but Melia believes that when it comes to cars, the eco-town formula falls far short. In his view, the government has to make a commitment to creating extensive bicycle networks as well as car-free neighbourhoods, or "the scepticism of the critics will have proven well founded".

From the EU's standpoint, the hope is that national and local governments will initiate planning processes that will rein in sprawl. The urbanists' hope is that concerns for global warming, as well as the global recession, will have people looking for ways to change their economically profligate and carbon-costly habits. Give communities a new paradigm for growth and new, sustainable designs for living may follow. ■

Bruce Stutz is the author of several books and regularly writes on science, nature, and the environment.
For more information, please visit: www.brucestutz.com



■ by Jane Harding

Andy Kunz on New Urbanism and High-Speed Trains in America

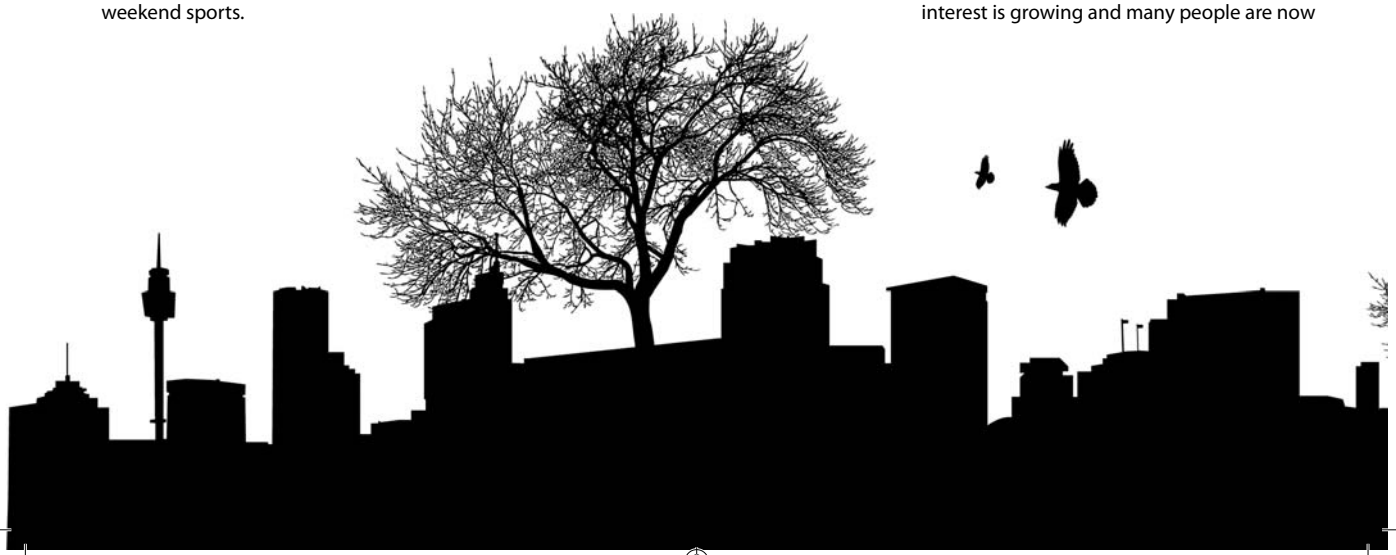
Urban Inspirations

Andy Kunz is an urban designer, new urbanist and a proponent of building new train systems to solve our transportation problems. Kunz talked to* Carbusters *about the importance of New Urbanism for creating* walkable *and* bikeable *towns and cities, as well as the urgent need for investments into green transportation. He lays out his ideas for high-speed rail as a solution for a number of problems facing transportation in the United States. Kunz suggests using principles of New Urbanism and introducing new rail-systems in the US will help to get people out of their cars, onto public transportation, and create more urban spaces with less room for the car.

What is New Urbanism all about and what does it mean for the carfree movement?
New Urbanism is a revival of the lost art of place making. The principles of New Urbanism come from a series of urban development and town planning practices, starting in many historical cities all over the world such as Greece and Rome. It is an updating of past practices transforming cities into more viable and enjoyable places to live. At its basis is creating urban spaces where the car is not required, with mixed-use public transportation and supporting walking and cycling as daily transportation, rather than weekend sports.

> **"New Urbanism is a revival of the lost art of place making"**

Where has New Urbanism worked best to create a walkable and bikeable urban area?
Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is one of the best examples in the world of a city that has reclaimed space taken up by the car. During the 1960s the city was full of cars and little by little they have reclaimed this space. Today, there is an entire network of carfree spaces – you will see people walking and using bikes all the time. Danish urban designer Jan Gehl was behind many of the changes in Copenhagen. He was also hired as a consultant in the US to show similar changes could be made in the city of New York. There have been positive changes including a movement towards removing cars from prime squares and streets, some blocks of the city are now completely closed off to cars – hopefully this is just the beginning. However, Europe is way ahead of America in terms of taking the car out of the picture. Although interest is growing and many people are now



using public transport, there still remains barely any carfree spaces in the US.

Can New Urbanism be applied anywhere in the world?
Absolutely. The principles behind New Urbanism come from time-tested principles of creating urban areas. So it already exists in many places all over the world, but the key is to get new urban developments to follow the same principles. In America this form of urban development was thrown away. Instead, from 1945, a completely foreign form of development took place, based around the car. It became a crazy sprawl with no history, which doesn't make any sense – economically, politically, functionally, or environmentally. The problem now is that many European and Asian countries are adopting the American urban model, when they should simply adapt an existing model from their own history.

You point towards investing in high-speed trains in the US as a solution to major crises including a collapsing economy, outdated infrastructure and out of control carbon emissions. Why did you choose trains over the alternatives?
Well we are promoting all of the alternatives. I see it as a complete system: high-speed trains are the backbone to regional rail systems, then local trams, trolleybuses and taxis, as well as areas to walk and cycle – together forming a green and sustainable transportation system. High-speed rail in particular connects the whole system, and feeds all forms of public transport so there is no need for a car in the system. But you need all the pieces to work together. It wouldn't matter if you were traveling six blocks, or six states all working components – an integrated rail system, or enhanced capacity for riding bikes and walking for example, means that there is no need for a car. It would also reduce dependency on oil and lower carbon emissions. Currently, US road networks are built for long distance and high-capacity travel, with smaller regional and local roads extending from this. So the idea is to form a parallel system all based on rail, bicycles and walking.

What examples can the US learn from?
You can see high-speed trains already in action in many parts of Europe and Asia. France started building high-speed rail in the early 1980s and has continued to improve this, as well as develop new systems to complement this. For example, a newly opened tram network opened in Nice feeds into the national train system and Paris has a Velib bicycle rental programme. Therefore, France and many parts of Europe are great models for America. But investment is what is needed.

"Instead of adopting the American urban model, European and Asian countries should adapt an existing model from their own history"

What reaction have you received from decision-makers and other stakeholders?
Now for the first time in many years we now have a president that appreciates and understands the value of high-speed rail. We have just passed a stimulus package that put in around US$9 billion into the rail system – one of the largest amounts of money invested into rail in US history. Currently there is huge interest in public transportation, particularly rail; it is being talked about at all levels. It's great to see so much interest for sustainable transportation.

The economic system is currently undergoing a major credit crisis. What has been the impact your plans for high-speed rail?
The economic crisis has had several implications. One of course is the question of when will we get the money to build? Of course, this is an investment and putting permanent solutions in place will benefit the country over time. It will also help reduce US dependency on imported oil, currently between US$6-7 billion is spent per year. Enhancing transport efficiency has many spin-offs such as improving the environmental, economic and social landscape. Moving people in a more sustainable way will lower costs of oil imports, create jobs in the building and running of the system; and generate opportunities in real estate for building compact, sustainable and carfree communities around the train stations.

In a world so obsessed with the car, are you optimistic that ideas from New Urbanism will make a difference to creating a more pedestrian-friendly urban culture?
New Urbanism has been doing that for a long time, it just needs to keep going. New Urbanism has been behind the revitalisation of many historical cities in the world, particularly in Europe and the US, which were not valued and either abandoned or demolished. In the US for example, many places have introduced carfree zones since the 1980s and other laws making them more walkable and updated with the introduction of an integrated public transportation system. But now it needs to be stepped up to a faster pace, to make a fundamental shift in how Americans travel – this can be brought together into one system.

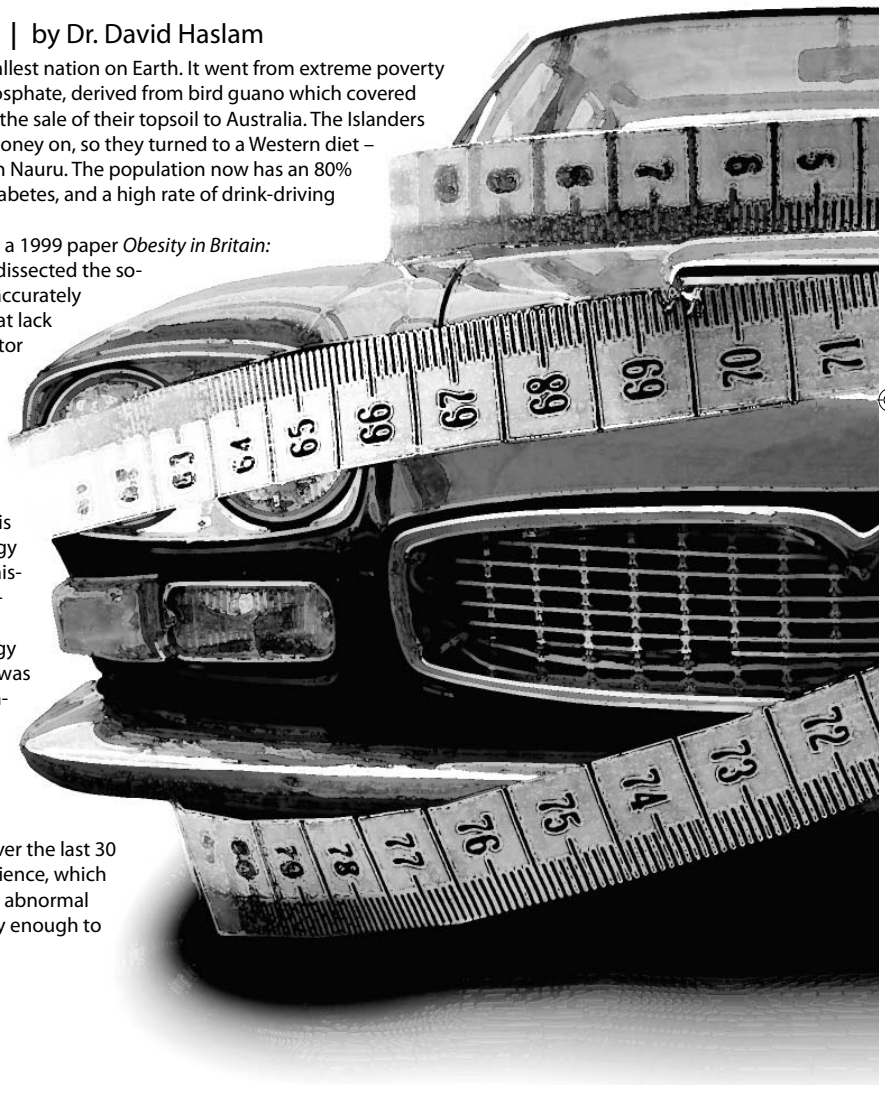
What projects have you got lined up for the future?
My main focus is to push for a paradigm shift in America. I think high-speed rail will help solve serious issues like climate change and peak oil. Everyone has a role to play in this. I am working on promoting and making it a national priority; working with advocacy groups to pressure the US government to provide the funding for it. In parallel with this I am helping promote the development of pedestrian and bike-friendly communities. There is no reason why America shouldn't introduce a Velib system like we see in Paris. The whole idea of carfree cities, widespread bicycle and train use is the solution to drastically cutting oil and other resource consumption. Solving these problems is making carfree cities the mainstream – walkable and bikeable cities are enjoyable places to live and have multiple benefits. ■

For more information, please visit:
www.UrbanDesign.org and **www.NewUrbanism.org**

Want To Lose
Give Up

"A diet recommended b

Obesity is a growing problem and it may keep on growing if nothing is done to f gers having unhealthy diets and lacking physical activity. This is another reason to ask Dr. David Haslam to outline the sociological and medical aspects of obesit good preventive tools and Cat Chappel from Travel Actively, which promotes



Drive your car in moderation | by Dr. David Haslam

Nauru, one of the Polynesian Islands, is the smallest nation on Earth. It went from extreme poverty to great wealth with the discovery that the phosphate, derived from bird guano which covered the island, was a valuable fertiliser, resulting in the sale of their topsoil to Australia. The Islanders became rich, but had nothing to spend their money on, so they turned to a Western diet – alcohol and cars. At first there were no roads on Nauru. The population now has an 80% obesity rate, and a 45% prevalence of type II diabetes, and a high rate of drink-driving and road traffic accidents (RTAs).

The health epidemic was analysed in detail in a 1999 paper *Obesity in Britain: Gluttony or Sloth?* by Prentice and Jebb, which dissected the so-called "obesogenic" environment we live in to accurately define the cause of obesity. They concluded that lack of physical activity was the most important factor behind the rising tide of obesity, citing specifically increased ownership of cars and TV sets as major culprits.

Although the study underestimates the amount of food eaten, especially outside the home, and presents a somewhat simplistic argument linking the different variables, there is no doubt that modern labour-saving technology such as the car has a lot to answer for. Our prehistoric ancestors were programmed to eat whenever food was available; to prepare for future times of famine and fast, and to conserve energy by resting in case our "flight or fight" response was called upon. Therefore those who laid down energy as fat, and were innately sedentary were in pole position for survival of the fittest.

However, evolution has played a nasty trick on us, and those very same characteristics and phenotypes lead to obesity, diabetes and premature death. Our environment has evolved over the last 30 years with advances in technology and food science, which has made weight gain a normal response to an abnormal environment. Our bodies cannot evolve quickly enough to

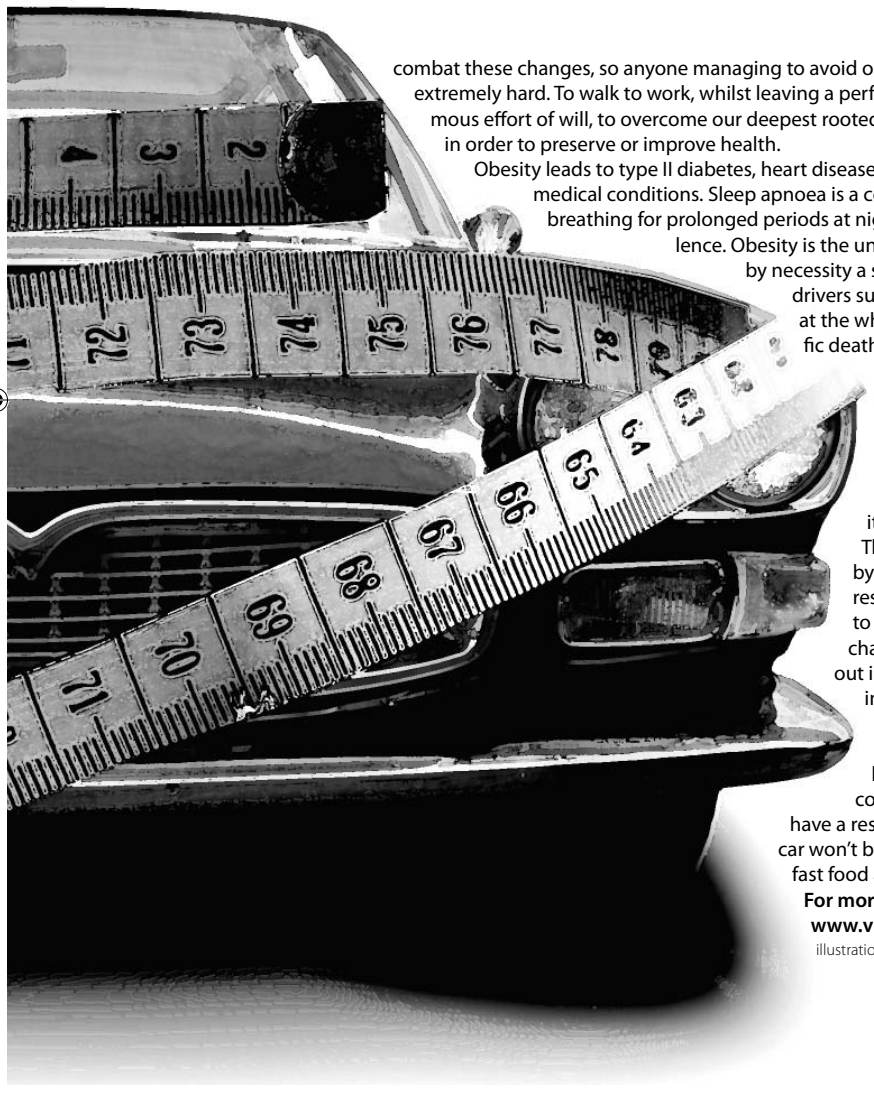
Get Physical | by Cat Chappell

The 2007 Foresight report *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices* laid bare the immense scale of the UK's obesity problem. Unless there is decisive action immediately, by 2050 almost 60% of the UK population could be obese. There is therefore a need for creating the right environment that helps people to build physical activity into their everyday lives, and then give them the skills and confidence to achieve this. The key to getting people walking and cycling regularly is by incorporating it into people's daily lives. Walking and cycling should be the natural transport choice for short journeys. But increasingly we are a society that has got out of the habit of walking, even for short local journeys to school, work or the shops. However, despite the fact that walking and cycling are the cheapest and most accessible form of exercise, physical and mental barriers, such as the belief that it can be time consuming, prevents people travelling actively.

e Some Weight?
Your Car!

d by Carbusters Magazine"

***e to fight it. Car culture plays a role in this phenomenon with drivers and passen-
ason to promote new models of urban planning and transportation. We decided
esity and to provide some advice to prevent it. Walking and cycling are obviously
otes these activities, outlines the health and mental benefits of these activities.***



combat these changes, so anyone managing to avoid obesity must either be extremely lucky, or work extremely hard. To walk to work, whilst leaving a perfectly functional car in the drive takes an enormous effort of will, to overcome our deepest rooted instincts, but such efforts of will are necessary in order to preserve or improve health.

Obesity leads to type II diabetes, heart disease, cancer, liver disease, infertility, and many other medical conditions. Sleep apnoea is a condition in which the sufferer snores, and stops breathing for prolonged periods at night, leading to daytime fatigue and somnolence. Obesity is the underlying cause, and as professional driving is by necessity a sedentary occupation, many taxi, HGV and bus drivers suffer from it. Sleep apnoea leads to falling asleep at the wheel and an alarming increase in RTAs and traffic deaths. The current adult population of the UK will lose a cumulative 100,000 million years of life because of obesity and related diseases. It has been shown by many models including French health organisations *Ville Sante* and EPODE that by empowering a population to make changes in physical activity and nutritional intake, obesity can be tackled.

The effort to change habits must be backed by sufficient political will, and must be properly resourced, but can be done. People will cycle to work if their employers provide shower and changing facilities, if their cycle lane doesn't peter out into the wrong lane of a dual carriageway, or involve murderous road intersections. In these times of economic hardship, there are savings to be made by walking or cycling to work or leisure pursuits, (and to turn to cheap home cooked seasonal produce). But the governments have a responsibility to make active travel safe travel. The car won't become obsolete just yet, but just like chocolate, fast food and ice cream should be enjoyed sparingly.

For more information, please visit:
www.villes-sante.com and **www.epode.fr**

illustration by | Tanja Eskola

Travel Actively is a consortium of leading walking, cycling and health organisations committed to enabling two million people to be more aware of how they could be more active by 2012. They recognise the importance of these daily activities and have 50 tailor-made walking and cycling projects spread over England. Their 2008 Annual Review gave an insight into how health projects can benefit individual's lives and health for the better. It highlighted improvements from increased physical activity in individual's mental and physical health, as well as some improvements to social inclusion and cohesion. By the end of 2008 over 85,000 people had participated to the many projects of Travel Actively. The new walkers and cyclists experienced numerous immediate benefits, but the next step is to make this sustainable in the longer run.

For more information, please visit: www.travelactively.org.uk

Carfree Creatives

Artistic Influences on the Carfree Movement

■ by Jane Harding

In March 2009 Martin Kaltwasser and Folke Köbberling, two artists from Berlin, Germany, took part in the car cult exhibition in Prague along with Carbusters. *Their works, which include* Crushed Cayenne, *a white wood sculpture Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) and bicycle made from recycled car parts, depict the occupation of public space and wastefulness of capitalism. With an impressive portfolio of installations, exhibitions and specific interventions, their latest works have concentrated on the car and its negative effects – reflecting their carfree lifestyle and influences from both the ecological and social environment.* Carbusters *caught up with Folke Köbberling to ask her thoughts on car culture, arts and the exhibition.*

"Crushed Cayenne" is a replica of a SUV made from recycled materials. What inspired you create this piece?
We are living in a car-dominated environment. Being carfree, Martin and I wanted to express our views on this, in particular on the SUV – as the "Crushed Cayenne". SUVs dominate the roads, pollute the environment and cause terrible accidents. By showing its self-destruction in a frontal crash of two Porsche Cayennes we are commenting on the hermetic, hedonistic and militant ideology design of SUVs. We hope that it helps people consider these implications and to stop buying not only these huge SUVs, but cars in general.

Art is becoming a popular way for people to express their carfree ideas. Why do you think this is?
In the 1950's and 1960's people began making installations about the use of cars. This is a growing trend and we continue to use the same principle in our work. In general contemporary art can be everything: affirmative, critical or phenomenological. And actually, critical art positions like ours are a minority in the contemporary global art context. We consider our work as a personal form of resistance – against cars, neoliberalism, consumerism, etc.

Much of your artwork supports sustainable mobility and resource alternatives. What can you say about the inspiration for your work?
Many things inspire our works. For example, what we read in the newspaper, or by simply observing how people live. We are particularly concerned about issues regarding mobility in cities, which are often surrounded by power struggles, ideology and irrationality. By exploring these issues visually it helps our understanding of why we desire things and how resources are used, such as the materials used to make cars. We want to show with our art that it is possible to create a better world for everybody – using the simplest methods and even using junk material.

How do you feel your work has evolved over time?
It has changed a lot, but no project is ever the same, and the car is an ongoing project. For example, the wooden SUV has moved to many places. We began by displaying it in a parking space but nothing happened, so we decided to move it and change its appearance every time – most recently at the car cult exhibition in Prague, fully displayed on a column to show its dominance. Many of our critical artworks, such as the SUVs, have turned into a series, but they also lead onto exploring other transport alternatives and possibilities.

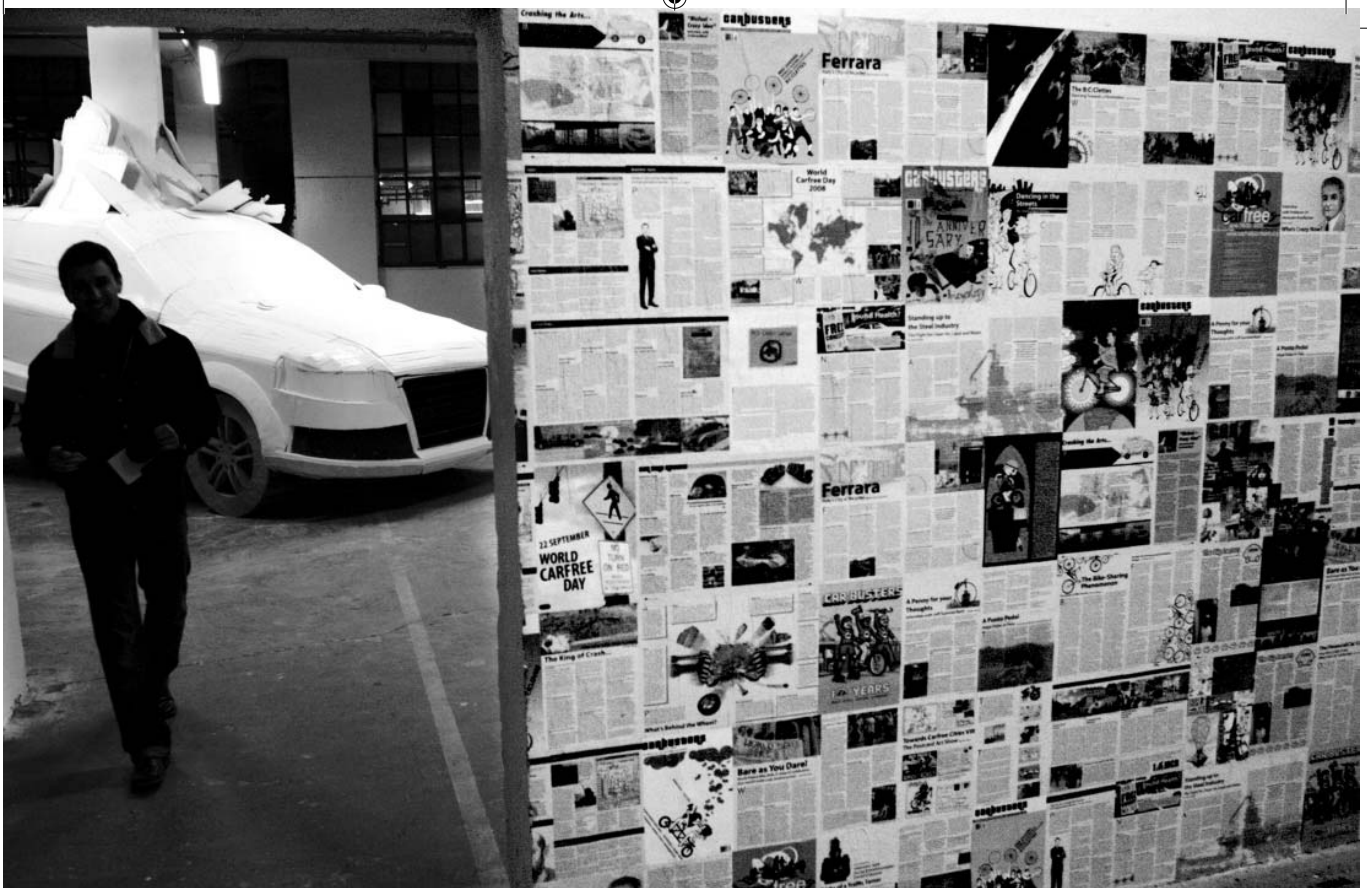
What has been your most memorable exhibition or work related to the carfree movement?
Every exhibition is memorable. On the subject of mobility, "Crushed Cayenne" was our first and biggest works. It has so much feeling and many can relate to this piece. Another important work was "Cars to Bicycles", based on the transformation of a Peugeot 205 into two working bicycles during a 20-day event in Austria last year.

How do you rate the effectiveness of your pieces?
Unfortunately I can't measure them! But there are small measurable results. For example, during a street exhibition in Berlin, we occupied a sign displaying "It's the car that kills you". It attracted a positive response of around 200 people – almost all came without a car. Generally, the reaction from car owners differs; either they totally ignore our pieces or, if they don't, they see our work as insignificant, in comparison to the gigantic car ideology which most people believe in.

In a world so obsessed with the car, are you optimistic for the future of sustainable mobility?
In Germany there are so many signs aimed at encouraging people to buy new cars. I think as long as car advertising is so strong then it is difficult to change people's attitudes and to try something new. But I think it is important to stay optimistic for the future.

What projects have you got lined up for the future?
We are now working on a project to transform a car into a bicycle and other useful products. We will work with design engineers to take a whole car apart and recycle 100% of its parts in to products that we will feature in a festival this summer in Hamburg, Germany.

For more information, please visit: www.folkekoebberling.de



Carbusters took part in a contemporary arts exhibition based on sustainable mobility, resource alternatives and utopian ideas during March in Prague, Czech Republic. Carbusters had the chance to work alongside artists, eco-designers and activist organisations, all sharing the carfree ideal.

It was a good opportunity to present the magazine in the form of the Carbusters wall. The exhibition was held at the Meet Factory, an alternative gallery that stands between a heavily congested motorway and a busy railway line – offering a great context to think about modern mobility.

The monthly Critical Mass ride in Prague, which entered into its 9th year, coincided with the exhibition. Auto*Mat, a Prague-based movement focused on improving conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, organised the ride and participated in the exhibition. Activities such as these help reduce car-dependency and create a healthier and livelier city.

Top : *Carbusters* Wall. Thanks to Jane Harding and Nathan Poetzscher for the realisation. photo © Jan Losenický

Below-left : *Crushed Cayenne* wooden sculpture of an SUV by Folke Köbberling and Martin Kaltwasser described as "a cynical answer to the hedonistic and consumer lifestyle of the 21st century". photo © Jan Losenický

Below-right : Red Cars hanging on the facade of Meet Factory by David Čzerny, a Czech artist behind many controversial works, including *Entropa* at the European Council. photo © Jane Harding

The Egg Truck, Kathmandu, Nepal. All images © Debra Efroymson

■ by Debra Efroymson

Fighting the Current

Carfree Activities in Low-Income Cities

What do the cities of Lusaka (Zambia), Manila (Philippines), Hanoi (Vietnam), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Kathmandu (Nepal), and Bangalore (India) have in common? Visually different as they are in many respects, any attempt to move about the streets makes it clear that pedestrians are not valued, and that the tiny elite minority in cars – or in some cases, the majority on motorbikes – rule the streets. Forget pedestrian priority or the concept of sharing the road with cyclists when you are in these cities; pedestrians and bicycles are considered obstacles to the movement of vehicles rather than valuable road users.

This despite the prevalence of high density, mixed use communities in which many facilities are available close to hand. Streets are lively, filled with people, formal and informal shops, tea stands, and vendors. Walking side by side with a friend maybe impossible given broken or absent sidewalks and the presence of a number of obstacles, from parked cars and motorbikes to construction waste and noodle stands, but the cities are vibrant and sometimes overpowering to the senses.

Another factor the cities have in common: high transport expenses by the low-income and reliance for jobs on the types of transport and activities that are steadily being discouraged or banned. Be they rickshaw drivers, cycle repairers, or street vendors, their livelihood is threatened, and the ability of the poor to access jobs, schools and other basic services is increasingly limited and endangered by the growing presence of cars on the streets.

Given the low rates of car ownership in low-income cities, it may seem surprising that the carfree movement is not stronger. There are several likely reasons for this. People are generally too busy making ends meet to become involved in a movement that they do not perceive as touching them directly. Organisations seeking to improve life in cities tend to be dependent on funding, and it is difficult to find a funder who supports the carfree movement. Finally, those in the middle class dream of car ownership and often react strongly to any possibility of their dream not becoming a reality. A common line is that those in the West have had their chance to enjoy their cars before starting to reduce their use; low-income cities must also go through the phase of car ownership before reaching car control. Meanwhile, powerful international agencies and corporations including the World Bank base their funding on car-centric "development", and officials feel unable to refuse offers of help, no matter how destructive they are to their cities. (I will optimistically assume that corruption has nothing to do with this.)

And one final factor that cities have in common: people are not (entirely) passively accepting the changes. In each city, individuals and organisations are working to promote the value of walking and cycling as means of transport and the vital need for public space.

The ugly reality

Cities in low-income Asian countries are choking in pollution and congestion. The air stinks, the noise levels can be nearly unbearable, and trying to get around the city is a frustrating and time-consuming experience.

Consider the case of Lusaka. According to Muyunda Ililonga of the Zambia Consumers' Association (ZACA), "Over-use of cars in Lusaka has put a strain on the economy because the country's oil import bills continue

to sky rocket. The country continues to spend meagre foreign receipts from its exports on the importation of motor vehicles, denying other critical areas of the economy the resources for growth". Ililonga also observes "Traffic congestion is a daily occurrence in Lusaka. This has resulted in increased road traffic accidents, air and noise pollution. The planning of the city means there is heavy concentration of concrete buildings with very little room left for open spaces for the city residents to engage in physical activities. The consequences are that children are confined to indoor environments without facilities for playing, leading to lost childhood". What he writes of Lusaka could be written about any number of low-income cities around the world.

Although the majority of the population in Hanoi gets about by motorbikes, growth in car use is becoming an increasing problem. A recent initiative to reduce motorbike and car ownership was blocked by the Ministry of Finance, which said that the problem in Hanoi is not too many vehicles but too few roads. A similar attitude is evident in the other cities, which seek to resolve congestion and pollution by expanding roads rather than limiting vehicles.

Glimmers of hope

All is not, however, grim – at least not to the eternal optimists among the growing carfree movement. However limited the successes to date, they suggest the possibility of working successfully for change and the fact that not everybody shares the dream of car ownership and car-filled cities.

In Lusaka, workshops with media and city officials brought attention to and tried to build support for concepts of liveable cities. Urban planners have responded positively to comments on the need to include infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists in the plans. They invited members of ZACA to future meetings and organised free bus transport from different points of the city to get people to an exhibit to comment on the plans. Unfortunately the successes come at a price: the anger of bus and taxi drivers who fear loss of business, and even threats on the life of the Executive Director of ZACA.

Various initiatives in the Philippines seek to improve the condition of rickshaw drivers. One proposal that has been tried in at least limited locales is to allow taxis only for long-distance trips and on major thoroughfares, and allow only rickshaws, not taxis, in congested central neighbourhoods. Cyclists have also gotten together to discuss their problems and demands and prepare a manifesto for central government on ways to improve the situation for cycling.

Government initiatives in Vietnam have unfortunately to date been limited mainly to failures (such as trying to limit licenses of motorbikes) and motorised vehicle-focused programs (such as the successful effort to enforce motorcycle helmet use). But civic groups are working together to save parks and promote the importance of public space,

Typical Street Sign, Bangalore, India

and a few limited efforts are underway to encourage cycling. Most recently, the Mayor of Hanoi stopped a project to build a multi-storey building in a city park. The importance of parks and public places is gaining recognition as part of a new campaign by the Vietnam Urban Planning Association, HealthBridge and other groups.

Various efforts throughout India seek to limit cars in the central city and to begin to consider the needs of children in urban planning. In Dhaka, initiatives by a range of NGOs include giving input to urban planners, fighting bans on rickshaws and vendors, teaching cycling to children, saving parks and canals, and working with urban planning students to create carfree city designs. An enormously difficult and challenging program in the most touristed part of Kathmandu temporarily succeeded in reducing motorised vehicle use. Ironically Maoists, who felt it would deter the ability of the poor to earn a living, opposed the problem. The long lines for petrol in Kathmandu as the country repeatedly faces fuel shortages, and the fact that most of the population gets about by foot and many goods are moved by bicycle would seem to make clear the need for and viability of carfree planning, but when does rationality ever win?

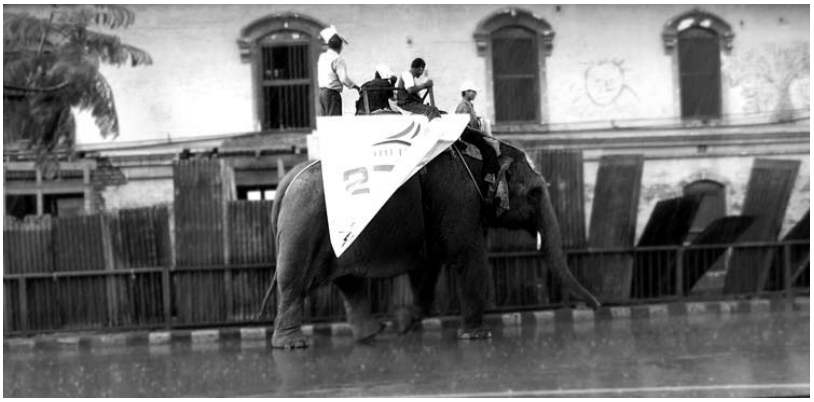
Lessons learned in Zambia are significant for other cities attempting to reduce or eliminate their cars. Fears of job loss are natural in any time, and especially during a global economic meltdown. That carfree cities would mean job gains not losses is a vital point, but not one likely to be appreciated by those whose employment is directly related to motor vehicles.

The middle class, which lives in aspiration of owning a car, is also likely to oppose carfree initiatives, as is the case in Lusaka and elsewhere. This is countered by the increasing number of people who appreciate the value of a good environment with minimal air and noise pollution. That is, while those employed in the motorised transport sector and many of the rich and middle class may oppose the concept of carfree cities, many ordinary citizens appreciate and accept it. As for the media, given the prevalence of car advertising, it is hardly surprising where they tend to stand.

While in one sense it is too late to say that the problems of car-centric cities can be avoided in the low-income cities of the world, it is also true that the infrastructure in such low-income cities is far more supportive of carfree lifestyles than in wealthier cities. Challenging as the work is, cars are still the minority vehicles and one cannot silence or dupe the majority forever. And global justice could be just around the corner, as the lively low-income cities of today are well positioned to become the most liveable and vibrant cities in the carfree world of tomorrow. ■

For more information, please visit: www.healthbridge.ca

Other forms of non-motorised transport, Kathmandu, Nepal



compiled by | Marko Thull

The development of alternative ways of transportation strongly depends on our capacity to create new tools and designs to open possibilities for a carfree future. This need for change concerns urbanism, transportation policies, technologies, and architecture, but also arts and fun. Carbusters decided to review some innovations and consider the practical improvement they bring like the bamboo bike, the funny dimension like the green wheel, or a mix of both with the Contrail.

© **André Forget** www.andreforget.ca

Shoe-Free Transportation

Have a look at this strange construction. Is it a new fashionable toy for the urban citizen, lacking nature, a new method of generating green energy or a demonstration to protest against experiments on animals in cosmetic factories?

Not at all, this is a creation designed in 2006 by a group of students from Dalhousie School of Architecture in Halifax, Canada. The students found this funny way to protest against the lack of green spaces in their city.

This hamster grass wheel for humans is indeed a good provocation to ask for more green spaces, but can also evoke interesting questions about our lack of time to enjoy them. Should we all be carrying a piece of grass with us to take profit of it? This may be needed in our modern cities where concrete, cars and speed are three fundamental ingredients of its grey alchemy.

Bamboo Bikes for Africa

The Bamboo Bike began as a small project in 1995 by Craig Calfee and has evolved into assisting entrepreneurs in the developing world to make their own bicycles out of locally sourced bamboo.

Bamboo bicycles are now produced in Ghana, West Africa, and soon in other African countries. Bicycles are in great demand as a major labour saving device; making daily tasks such as transporting food and water six times more efficient than on foot. In Africa, Bamboo is easy to grow and can be cultivated in dry areas with minimal irrigation, and does not need to be imported as a raw material. So the Bamboo bike has become popular because it costs less to manifacture than to import steel bikes, as they do not require electricity or a large investment in equipment. Although they require a significant amount of labour to produce, this provides skilled employment and apprenticeship opportunities for young people.

High unemployment rates and the lack of cost-effective transportation are two persistent problems in developing countries. "Bamboosero", emerging from the bamboo bike project, aims for sustainable development project and long term growth. The goal is to enable entrepreneurs in developing countries to start their own bamboo bicycle manufacturing businesses. **www.calfeedesign.com**

© **Studio Gelardi**

Colouring the pavements

Studio Gelardi, a sustainable product design and engineering firm based in New York, USA, invented an interesting tool for developing bicycle communities last year. The "Contrail" is a concept bicycle device that you can fix above the wheel of your bike and that covers the bicycle wheel with a coloured layer of chalk.

The purpose is to provide a better feeling of safety and community to bikers by leaving a mark on the road. Using this device, bicyclists leave a coloured track behind them, allowing other bikers to see where is safe to ride. More bikers taking the same trail, stronger the route will appear on the road – reminding cyclists and also cars drivers that the street is a place shared by different users. **www.gelardi.com**

illustration by | Andy Singer

■ by Roger Bysouth

World Economic Crisis
Auto Industry Blues

The world recession has brought the car industry to a point of crisis. Production and sales are falling. Should *Carbusters* be celebrating? Or is it too early to predict the end of the petrol engine?

The views of the heads of government in London for the G20 Summit on April 2 2009 can be easily guessed. Their chief concern was to return to business as usual, as soon as possible. They looked at putting funds into the economy to create credit for business, keeping trade free and regulating financial markets and institutions – all this would be achieved by tinkering with, but still relying on, the same industries and institutions as before. And that means oil and automobiles at the centre of things.

The car industry did not cause the economic crisis. There is a worldwide imbalance in finance, where often unregistered derivatives dwarf mainstream or traditional credit. The car industry could be seen as a healthy way to create wealth in comparison. Nevertheless the accumulation of "toxic" debts even among "safe" banks has meant a squeeze on credit for all business. This and the collapse in consumer demand have damaged the car industry.

Cars have until now been the ideal capitalist product: they can be mass produced but still be highly priced and desirable. For a century the car industry has been a barometer for the world's economy and individual economies. When it has boomed economies have boomed; and when it has been in recession world trade has suffered. However, the car industry is not able to bounce back right now – people are just not buying the things, at least not in the numbers they used to. The G20 wants us all to start consuming again at the rate we were two or three years ago. The car industry is not taking this lying down. It argues it must be helped to avoid bankruptcy. Where it usually expected government to leave it alone, it now wants governments to pay to protect it. It suggests that if it disappears, countries will have no manufacturing base, and therefore be dependent on imports from regions with cheaper labour.

In the US, as sales have plummeted, Barack Obama has told both General Motors and Ford to get their houses in order before receiving shares of a US$6 billion bailout to the auto industry. This is mainly about getting it financially right rather than protecting the environment. The president walks a fine line between insisting on change and alienating the powerful interests of auto industry owners and labour.

European governments are also offering loans to keep industry afloat. The French government has promised €7.5 billion to its car industry and the UK government UK£2.3 billion but with attached conditions, which the car industry has so far not met. But many car plants still feeling the financial pinch have had to lay off staff and cut production. Renault is making 6,000 people redundant and Peugeot 5,000. Outside Europe the situation is just as turbulent: China car sales have grown, but with the aid of cuts in purchase tax, and in South Korea sales have fallen, despite government incentive schemes.

French and German governments have taken a slightly different measure, by offering consumers cash to scrap older cars to buy new. So French drivers are offered €1,000 to scrap any car over ten years old and buy new. These schemes have been presented as an environmentally-friendly measure, on the grounds that new cars are more fuel efficient. This, though, does not take into account energy use and pollution in the complete lifecycle of cars from manufacture, through to disposal. Such scrapping schemes have kept sales healthy for the time being in some European countries. In Germany sales rose by €200,000 when in the same period British sales fell by €500,000.

All car industries are in trouble, but the car is not dead. There is little talk of converting the industry to more useful production, like mass rather than personal transportation. This recession will force the industry to develop more economical fuels and vehicles, in the same way as the 1970s oil crisis did. But the industry and, worryingly, the new US administration now put their hopes in biofuels, a major threat to world food supplies as well as the environment. Other than that the long-term message is "no change".

Carbusters should not over-estimate the change of heart of consumers. It is true fewer people are buying cars, and more are using public transport and bikes. But at the moment, it seems people intend to return to their consumerist ways when (but perhaps we should say if) the crisis passes. This does not mean *Carbusters* should just sit back – now is precisely the time to get the Carbusting message out. At no time in the last 80 years have people's beliefs about the economic system had such a shock. People in the more powerful countries of the G20, as well as those in poorer countries are more receptive to alternatives. This is especially so now for two reasons: ideas about growth and whom to trust no longer ring true, and people must adopt new ways of doing things because they simply cannot afford the old ones. This could translate to the political arena as the old worldwide, multi-party, multi-interest consensus on growth is more clearly seen to be inadequate. ■

by Joel Crawford

Making Today's Cities Carfree

It is urgently necessary to build and to promote new models of urbanism less car-dependant that can allow one to choose freely his mode of transportation. Therefore there is a need to think about new systems of urban planning, but also to think about possibilities to convert existing places into carfree areas. Over the last few decades, models of car-based urbanism have spread around the world and now the challenge is to move away from this evolution. This is the path that Joel Crawford will follow in this new column about carfree conversions.

The Lyon Protocol Revisited

One of the many fruits of the first Towards Carfree Cities conference held in Lyon, France in 1997 was the drafting of a document known as *The Design and Implementation of Large Car-Free Districts in Existing Cities*. I was one of the authors of this document and later gave it the descriptor *The Lyon Protocol*. It was a rather hasty piece of work, and so far as I am aware, it has never been revised. I reviewed it before starting work on this article, and I am pleased to see that it holds up quite well after a dozen years. Some of the principles it established have since been expanded upon, most recently in *Carfree Design Manual*, which takes as a fundamental belief that future residents of a carfree district should be the ones to do much of its panning and most of its design.

Let us begin with a quick look at the *Lyon Protocol*. First of all, it recognised the effects of scale. Implementation of small projects would be quite different from larger projects. It was recognised that any large conversion project would require the early involvement of all organisations and individuals who would be affected, including people outside the immediate area of the conversion. Conflicts must be identified early, before they become problems, and broad support for the project must be developed. A data-gathering process, including mapping, demographics, and transport, is an early step. All available information on the site is needed. This is an immense amount of data, but most of it is routinely gathered for large-scope urban planning efforts.

Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich: **Electric trams gliding quietly along the car-free traffic lanes**

A working group would then develop a preliminary concept. This includes the boundaries of the carfree area, proposed changes in traffic circulation, traffic-reduction measures, and the ultimate carfree plan. In particular, freight delivery and through traffic require careful attention, as these concerns can sink a carfree project at an early stage. Phasing was also mentioned as an early concern, because in most cases a sudden conversion to the desired end result is politically impossible. A "carrot-and-stick approach" would encourage good practices and discourage bad ones. Public transport, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure would be improved. Measures would be adopted to slow traffic, reduce the space devoted to cars, and restrict parking.

Street parking near the centre would be the first to go. Cars would be required to park steadily farther away from the centre, encouraging people to use public transport or bike. Parking fees would be greatly increased over a period of a few years. Car use would be reduced gradually. The first to go would be private cars of non-residents, followed later by private cars of residents. Traffic cells would discourage cross-city travel. Parking permits would be sold only with a transport pass. One final change is the conversion of freight delivery from conventional trucks to the chosen system. (The retention of truck delivers during limited hours is an option.) Ultimately, only emergency-service vehicles should be permitted.

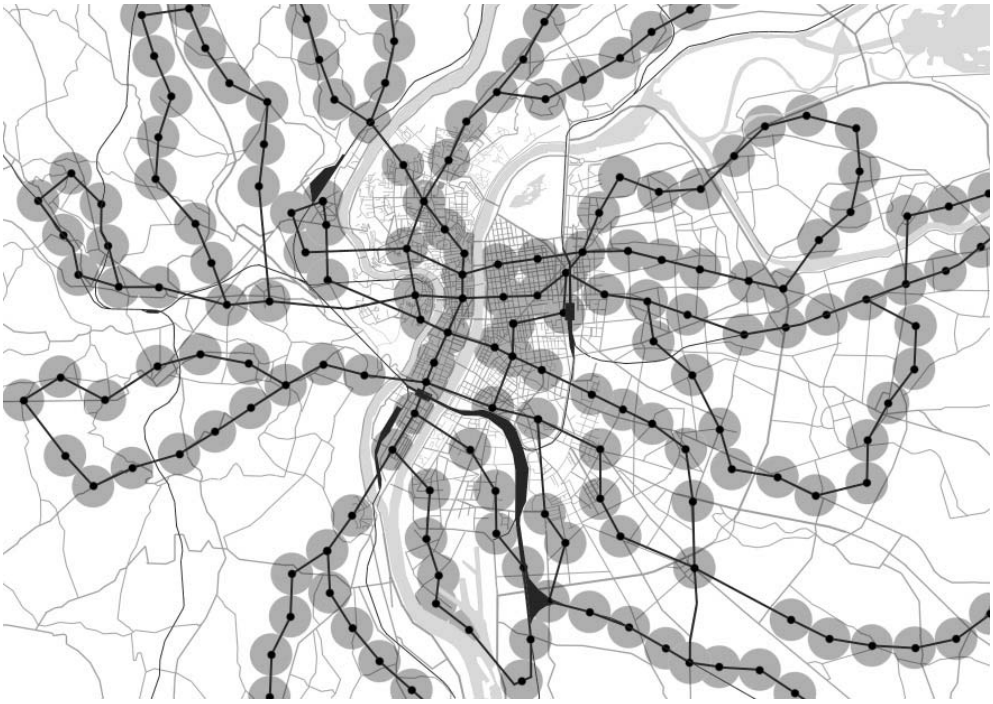
The news media are essential to a good outcome, but specific plans should not be presented too hastily. The ground must be prepared by a long discussion of the problems caused by cars and the alternatives that solve these problems. The benefits are large and should be stressed from the start. If this is badly handled, resistance might harden at an early stage. The process is inherently political, and the support of local politicians is essential. To secure broad support, the concept plan is presented to each of the affected groups for discussion. As unmet needs are revealed, they will affect the plan. The process of contacting groups and responding to their concerns would continue until all serious obstacles have been overcome.

Near the end of the process, a week-long intensive community design workshop could be held to manage the more stubborn problems and to secure broad agreement by all stakeholders. This workshop could be sponsored by the city government, which by this time should be strongly in support of the plan. Interested parties would join in this brain-storming process, with the objective of reaching consensus on a plan. City planning officials would then develop final plans and phasing. Do make certain that the city's final plan respects this consensus. Major deviations should not be adopted without broad discussion.

The Need for a Long-Term Master Plan

The *Lyon Protocol* did not directly address the question of removing cars from an entire city. This leads to a risk that the implementation of plans in one area might interfere with later expansions of the carfree areas. There are a number of points where this might occur, but parking, public transport, and freight delivery are likely.

I do not foresee that cars will completely disappear. Eventually, their use in cities will be largely or entirely prohibited, but a transport mode that reaches rural areas is required, probably involving some continued use of private cars. The interface between rural cars and the city thus requires careful planning. I propose simply to build multi-story parking garages (preferably underground) at the city's edge for visitors' cars and car-sharing vehicles. City residents who regularly need a car to travel outside the city could rent a space. These garages must be linked to the city by good public transport. This is, of course, less convenient that driving directly to a destination within the city and will discourage people from using cars unnecessarily.



Concept for a Carfree Lyon: Presented in 1997

"Nowhere more than in urban planning are the interests of rich individuals and corporations at stake than in the adoption of a city's master plan"

In Carfree Cities, I proposed the development of "utility areas" at the edges of carfree cities. Utilitarian functions would be located here, including parking, staging areas for freight delivery, warehousing, heavy manufacturing, and other noxious uses. Utility areas require connection to the rest of the city by public transport. For freight delivery I have proposed "metro-freight", an adaptation of passenger metro technology. This system uses standard shipping containers to deliver freight to locations alongside a dedicated freight-only route that runs through the city. Smaller and lighter freight can be delivered short distances by bike or special modes as required. I want to eliminate routine truck traffic in carfree cities.

I believe that the carfree city, if it is to exceed a population of, say, 20,000, will depend upon a high-quality public transport system to connect the various city districts. I believe that this should be a rail-based system, such as a tram or underground metro. I am opposed to the construction of any above-ground transport facility. It is simply too ugly, intrusive, and noisy. Buses could be used instead of rail systems, but the quality of service is lower, and operating costs are higher. Finally, buses are noisy and polluting. Even with the advances made by "bus rapid-transit" systems, I hold that they are inferior to rail.

The master plan for a city that is contemplating a widespread conversion to the carfree model must establish the routes for these systems and the locations for the parking garages and other utility functions. These are not decisions that can be taken on the fly. Rail systems do have one serious limitation: they do not accommodate sharp curves. It is true that narrow-gauge trams can turn remarkably sharp corners (often with an ear-splitting screech), but this is a bad design condition that slows service and increases maintenance costs.

About 50 years ago, Amsterdam looked at its need for metros and adopted a metro network plan. Some parts of that plan will probably never be realised, but once the troublesome North-South line is finally completed, the city will have a coherent metro network that largely follows the originally-identified routes. This sort of large-scale planning should be commenced at an early date in most cities. It is otherwise likely that awkward conditions will arise that have no good long-term solution. Either the work will have to be done again, at huge expense, or the limitations will have to be accepted as permanent.

This leaves us with the conclusion that while small-scale, local projects can proceed largely without consideration of the city as a whole, large-scale conversions must anticipate long-term changes. One point that is likely to be overlooked is the provision of adequate green space. Many existing cities are seriously deficient in parks near the centre. Plans for carfree conversions should include the ultimate reversion of some of the more sparsely-settled areas to green space, at the same time that areas near transport halts are made more compact.

The need for centralised planning in no way implies that citizens should be excluded from the process. Typically, public input is limited to the conclusion of planning. The planners have already decided what they want to do, in great detail. Changes are difficult to make at that point. A better process involves citizens and their visions at an early stage, with renewed consultation as the plans emerge and are refined. As a matter of practical democracy, this is a better way to proceed.

Finally, we must guard against the influences of special interests. Nowhere more than in urban planning are the interests of rich individuals and corporations at stake than in the adoption of a city's master plan. It is probably impossible to elimi nate this influence, but a transparent process in which all stakeholders and their concerns are clearly identified will go a long ways towards reducing the corrupting influence of private interests on public planning.

In the next issue, we will take up the matter of gradual implementation in more detail. ■

For more information, please visit:
www.carfree.com
All images © Joel Crawford

The Pleasure of Carlessness

There are many reasons to quit your car. You can do it in order to spare money, weaken your environmental impact, and improve your health or just "for the thrill of it" like River Laker. Along with Stephen Young, we discover two different ways of carfree living and demonstrating the pleasure of Carlessness.

© John Reburn

For the Thrill of It

By River Laker

I sold my car on Friday, November 28, 2008 to the first person who came to see it. That was as far ahead as I planned for my new status of "carlessness". Irresponsible? Perhaps. But not knowing what was going to happen, wondering how one lives without a car, it was all close to thrilling for me! And anyway, I countered, what's the worst thing that could happen? Buying another car! There was little risk involved.

What caused this thrill about being rid of the car? A dislike of urban driving; living in a country that has a police force zealous for playing cat and mouse at traffic stop signs; two-hour parking spaces; car repair bills; and a pace of life that is hyper enough without the tendency of a car to multiply that speed. I put my recycling trash out each week for collection and try to live a somewhat 'green' lifestyle but environmentalism wasn't a factor in the car sale. Adventure, and the removal of the 'burden' is how I sum it up: "Sell your car – an easy, quick way to getting some instant gratification!"

Jeremy Holmes of RIDE Solutions, an organisation that advocates for car-light lifestyle and I met up the day after I sold the car. Still caught up in the thrill of carlessness, I quickly took Holmes' challenge: to commit to six months without car and to blog about it. This could be fun I thought. We quickly created the blog: "CarLessBrit: Living in Roanoke without a car, a 6 month experiment" and other social-networking pages.

Roanoke, Virginia, is a city in the US, where the car continues to rule and living environments continue to be designed with the car at the hub of the wheel. But in the US, as Holmes says "while talking about sustainable transportation in the context of climate change, carbon footprints, air quality, is getting attention from a new audience… there is still a certain crunchiness about it that limits its appeal."

After six weeks of daily carless documentation in social media, we successfully sent press releases to local traditional media outlets (TV, radio and print). Even a much bigger city, Richmond, a three hour drive away considered it a story worthy of almost a whole page in their daily newspaper. Why would one person choosing to walk and ride a bike instead of drive be considered newsworthy? Holmes, attempts to sum up the appeal,

"River, notably, is not an environmentalist. River leaped into carlessness as an adventure, and watching his videos and reading his blog entries it is readily apparent that he is not approaching the effort with the sort of sombre morality that can sometimes be a part of a dark-Green true believer. The people he interviews, the stories he tells, are just pure fun and adventure. When he shoots a video of himself listening to birds, or talking about a favourite musician while walking home, it shows that there's nothing particularly difficult or earnest about what he's doing. Even when he's wading in to environmentalism, it's still with a sense of adventure, experimentation, a 'what if?' context."

RIDE Solutions documents a spike in alternative transportation interest since the experiment began; emails arrive from around the US and even Europe telling of how CarLessBrit has inspired bike riding, walking to work or simply catching the bus; and schools and universities have asked him to speak to their students. CarLessBrit is now working on a movie, a party and a biking-wear fashion show.

It is definitely refreshing to see someone giving up his car not driven by values, not even driven necessarily by money, but simply because he thought it would be a great adventure. ■

www.carlessbrit.tumblr.com

Get a life, not a car

By Stephen Young

Imagine that you are living in the late 19th century. Now, imagine that TV has already been invented. Not only that, but one of the most popular TV shows is *Dragons Den*, where investors decide whether they should put their cash into the new ideas that are paraded in front of them by eager inventors. It is 1876, and into the Den strides one Nikolaus Otto, who has been working to develop a practical four-stroke cycle engine. Otto begins his presentation, saying, "I have invented an engine that can be dropped into today's horse drawn vehicles to enable them, with an onboard source of fuel, to be self-propelled. The owner of such a machine will be able to go wherever he wants whenever he wants." He fires up the prototype and it performs flawlessly. The Dragons are impressed with the vision and with the machine. They reach for their chequebooks. Then one asks, "Is there a downside?" Let's assume that Otto is not only a clever inventor, but also a skilled forecaster. He replies as follows,

"If we go ahead, my projection is that about a century from now there will be 600 million of these vehicles in active use. Unfortunately, they will be directly responsible for killing around one and a half million people a year. Their emissions will be a major contributor to the growing problem of global warming, which will threaten all life on earth. Accommodating so many of these vehicles will

require that we spread tarmac over huge trenches of countryside, while many towns and cities will end up with much of their surface area devoted to roads. Not only that, but my invention will damage the social fabric of communities, cause social isolation and result in massive urban sprawl. The need to put fuel in the tanks of these vehicles will dominate foreign policy orientations of the major powers and lead to decisions that will cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and cost trillions of dollars. And did I mention the noise and pollution?"

The Dragons look at each other and sigh. They love the idea, but they put their chequebooks back in their pockets. One Dragon comments, "No politician, planner or policy maker will ever let this happen. Any health or environment minister would try to ban it. The scientific and medical advisors to governments would have a fit. And can you imagine what the health & safety guys would say?"

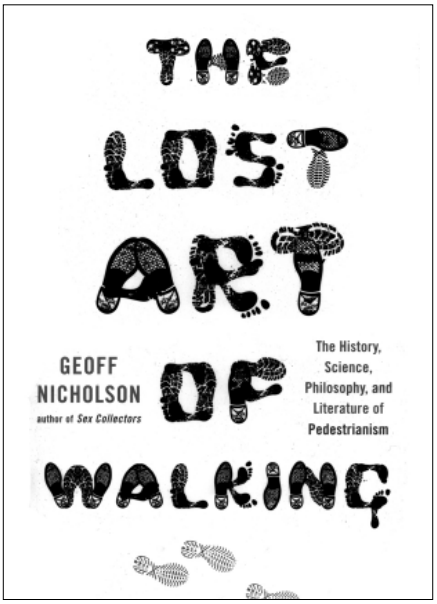
You know the rest. And now those same politicians, planners and policy makers are coming to the conclusion that something has to be done. Some countries are making some progress, but most societies have become re-structured around the car, which makes disengagement even more difficult – even assuming there is the political will for change. I have been carfree since 1995, and I'm now working on some initiatives, which try to persuade other people to go the same way. So what do I bring to the carfree party?

While I'm all in favour of people giving up their car for the greater good, it's a sad truth that there aren't enough of us out there willing to do this. So my focus is not on the impact of car ownership on everyone else. Instead, I'm concentrating on the costs of car ownership for the car owner: not just the financial costs, but the increasing evidence which shows that owning a car makes you fat, makes you unhealthy, and eats up your time. In fact, when you start to think about it, the total costs of car ownership often outweigh the benefits. It's just that most people haven't got round to doing the analysis. Yet.

As an increasing proportion of the world's population live in urban areas, the scope for going carfree is increasing. So I aim to provide access to some of the facts which may persuade people to think differently: to think that a car-free life is a better life, that you can give up your car and have more money, more time, be fitter and thinner, be happier, and more free. It might even save your life. ■

www.GiveUpYourCar.com
www.TheCarDelusion.com

book review



The Lost Art of Walking
The History, Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Pedestrianism
By Geoff Nicholson
Riverhead Books, 2008, 288pp
ISBN 9781594489983

■ **by Tim Wojcik**

Geoff Nicholson is a walker. It is what he likes to talk about; it is how he defines himself. So he requested and received his publisher's approval to write a book about walking. However, this book is not about the "art of walking". The author readily admits that he was in fact laid-up for much of the writing process due to injury. Perhaps for that reason, the book reads like an anthology of walks – littered by the author's personal anecdotes and opinions about walking and walkers. But the book does do one thing very well – it makes you want to take a good walk.

Early in the first chapter, after describing the random, very damaging fall he suffered, Nicholson hits on a curious truth – in fact, humans are not very well adapted to walking. After all this evolution, we are still prone to frequent and occasionally severe foot, back, knee, and leg injuries. And while this seems to be a negative, his personal experience with injury provides the author with a revelation. He is able to identify that his attraction to walking is linked to his own personal contentment. He walks to feel happy, to release himself from the onset of depression, to resolve questions with his writing.

After this honesty about his own relationship with walking, it seems unfortunate that the tone of his book does not follow in that vein. This book is written from, and perhaps for, a white, hetero, male, British perspective. And his pronounced judgements about other walkers that do not coincide with that perspective permeate throughout the text. His response to pedestrian-advocacy and the "New Agers" (sic) are uniquely glib and dismissive. As he sees it, most people who claim to be environmentally conscious are hypocrites who drive long distances in order to get in to "nature" and go for a good walk. While he has a general point that this reader does not ignore, these types of judgements about how others value walking cannot help but leave a sour taste.

"The book's unquestionable value is that the author whets your appetite for walking."

There are, however, some wonderful anecdotes throughout the book, provided by great walkers of yesteryear. These passages lend a gift of perspective and scope that the author's words are often unable to accomplish. For instance, the author quotes William Blake as he refers to the need so many of us feel to shape our own environments by the walks we take when he says, "I must create a system, or be enslaved by another man's".

The book's unquestionable value is that the author whets your appetite for walking. In disclosure, since receiving the book, I have spent much more time walking than reading the text. Nicholson's accomplishment is to tell tale after tale of walks and walkers: odd quests and benign routes, Crip Walk dance and walking sticks, some legendary tales, and some fake legends. But instead of digging into these stories, his descriptions often read as Wikipedia summaries – basic facts, curious surprises, and a lightly tossed, sometimes humourous remark that sums up the author's opinion on that topic.

So follow the books examples. Get outside. Breathe some air. And walk. ■

BOOKS

ALICE IN UNDERLAND
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999, 88 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180
A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairytale, takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America.

ASPHALT NATION
How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages
US$29, EUR 20, £15, or CZK 520
Asphalt Nation is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, personal and architectural solutions to the problem, Kay shows that radical change is possible.

CARFREE CITIES
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
US$35, EUR 24, £18, or CZK 620
An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, Carfree Cities outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life.

CARFREE DESIGN MANUAL
J.H. Crawford, 2008, 600 pages, hardcover
US$45, EUR 35, £32, or CZK 950
Carfree Design Manual starts from the urban planning principles established in *Carfree Cities* and shows how to design beautiful carfree districts that are places to build a satisfying and sustainable life.

CAR SICK
Lynn Sloman, 2006, 192 pages
US$29, EUR 20, £15, or CZK 520
"Cars cause environmental destruction, provoke stress and tear the heart out of communities. *Car Sick* provides a page-turning account of how we got into this mess, and more importantly, charts an attractive way out." - T. Juniper, Friends of the Earth

CUTTING YOUR CAR USE
Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Anna Semlyen, 2007, 96 pages
US$12, EUR 8, £6, or CZK 210
A personal traffic reduction guide available in UK or US version. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give it up completely.

DIVORCE YOUR CAR!
Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages
US$20, EUR 14, £10, or CZK 360
Divorce Your Car! speaks to individuals, encouraging readers to change their own driving behaviour without waiting for broader social change, stressing that individual action can drive social change.

END OF THE ROAD
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180
There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport.

FAMILY MOUSE BEHIND THE WHEEL
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages, hardcover
US$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180
Colourful illustrated book that teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences.

FOR LOVE OF THE AUTOMOBILE
Looking Back Into th History of our Desires
Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover
US$56, EUR 38, £28, or CZK 990
Examining the history of the automobile from the late 1880s to the present, Sachs shows how the car gave form to the dreams and desires embedded in modern society and in so doing reshaped our very notions of time and space, our individual and societal values, and our outlook onprogress and the future. In sum: an excellent and detailed cultural history of the car.

LIFE BETWEEN BUILDINGS
Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages
US$40, EUR 27, £20, or CZK 720
First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. *Life Between Buildings* is the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

NEW CITY SPACES
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 2001, 263 pages
US$60, EUR 41, £25, or CZK 1,070 [hardcover]
Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, this informative book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.

PUBLIC SPACES - PUBLIC LIFE
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1996, 96 pages
US$49, EUR 33, £25, or CZK 870
Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark, over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES
Justin Hyatt, 2006, 52 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180
The *Sustainable Mobility Guide For Municipalities* provides a full spectrum of themes related to transportation, urban design, mobility management and more. It is aimed at decision makers as well as NGO's working in the field of transport and urban planning, or anyone else interested in a broad survey of urban mobility issues.

THE AGE OF THE BICYCLE
Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
US$15, EUR 10, £8, or CZK 270
"What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour..."

THE LITTLE DRIVER [Special Offer!]
Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages
US$7, EUR 4.5, £3.5, or CZK 105
A children's book for young and old, *The Little Driver* takes a fresh look at our obsession with cars through the eyes of a boy still young enough to take nothing for granted.

CARTOONS

CARtoons
Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages
Book: US$10, EUR 7, £5, or CZK 180
CD-ROM: US$5, EUR 3.50, £2.50, or CZK 90
Optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics
A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's infamous graphics.

ROADKILL BILL [Special Offer!]
Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages
US$7, EUR 4.5, £3.5, or CZK 105
It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In *Roadkill Bill,* the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first and only time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.
Half-price discount: when you buy ten or more *Roadkill Bill*.

karikAUTury, GÉPregény, karikAUTúry, and AUTOkomiks

CARtoons has been published in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish. The books are part of amultilinguism project. To order, please contact: **orders@worldcarfree.net**

DVD

CARAVAN/PRAGUE
2007, 76 min., DVD, US$20, EUR 13, CZK 320
A bicycle caravan travels across Europe to shut down the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank. It will function without money, without leaders, and without permission from any authority. The police have other ideas…

SOURCE*

2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free PAL (plays on all PCs) - US$25, EUR 17, £13, or CZK 450
The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption, greed and Western money flowing into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea. This documentary takes you to the source.

STILL WE RIDE!
In Tandem Productions, 2005, 37 min., DVD
US$20, EUR 14, £10, or CZK 360
This action-packed documentary is a glimpse into the shocking showdown between the monthly Critical Mass bike ride and New York City police in the months after the Republican National Convention in August 2004.

STICKERS

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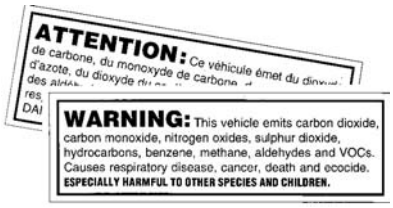
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